















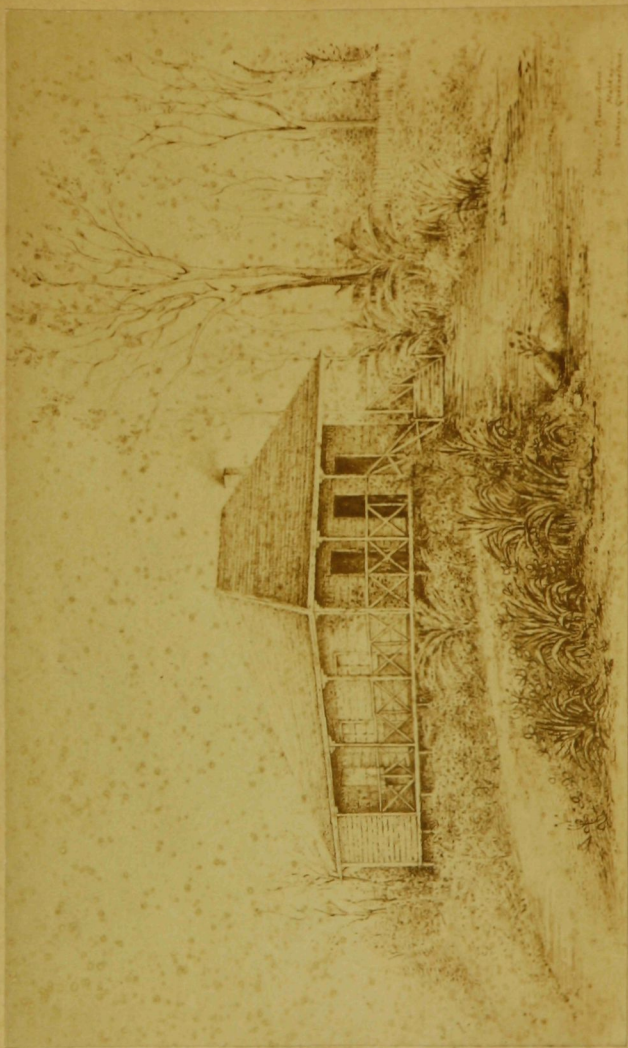


FOUR YEARS  
IN  
QUEENSLAND.









A SQUATTER'S HOUSE.

FOUR YEARS  
IN  
QUEENSLAND.

BY  
E. B. KENNEDY.

With a Map.

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LONDON:  
EDWARD STANFORD, 6 & 7, CHARING CROSS.  
1870.



“The pride to rear an independent shed  
And give the lips we love unborrowed bread,  
To skirt our homes with harvests widely sown,  
And call the blooming landscape all our own,  
Our children’s heritage in prospect long.”

CAMPBELL.

## P R E F A C E.

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I HAVE so often been asked by friends at home, "What sort of country is Queensland?" "What is the life like?" "Whether it would be advisable to emigrate?"—and so many other questions, that I think the best way of answering them is to "jot down" my experience and remarks in the following little work; and in doing so I wish it to be understood that I have done my best to paint matters as they really are, and to describe everything precisely as it presented itself to me during a residence of over four years in the Colony, and this without making any attempt at scientific writing, or more than "touching upon" the politics of the Colony.

In addition to my own observations I have availed myself of the various reliable sources of information to which I have had access, and in doing so have been exceedingly careful only to choose those which I know to be perfectly trustworthy, and in which I had the fullest confidence.

Instead of giving the new Land Act in its entirety, I have made use of an excellent little pamphlet issued by the Lands Office at Brisbane, giving a digest of the most important parts of the Act.

Though I am quite prepared to have this little work criticised by old colonists and others, yet it must be borne in mind that it is written expressly for intending emigrants at a time which I think may be considered opportune, when the great importance Queensland has raised herself to latterly, in her new industries of growing Sugar and Cotton, is taken into account, and also from the fact that many are now turning their thoughts towards the Colonies, owing to the overcrowded state of the professions at home, and the reductions already being made in those very professions.

E. B. K.

London, 1869.



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# FOUR YEARS IN QUEENSLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

It is now nine years since Queensland undertook the responsibilities of self-government, and during that time public attention has been largely directed to her as a field for colonization. The ups and downs of the Colony during this period have been great, yet few colonies under the British rule have made more rapid progress in the same space of time. Her resources are so varied, and she possesses so many advantages over other colonies, that her future may well be calculated with interest, and never more so than at the present time. Her differences of climate, combined with some peculiarities in it, and her varieties of rich soils, allow her to produce to perfection not only all tropical vegetation, but also all those plants which require a colder climate, even to frost. Her mineral wealth is now being developed literally all over the explored continent. Her pastoral resources are almost unlimited.

Queensland is *bound* to advance, *cannot* be held



back : recollect how any attempt at agriculture was sneered at a few years ago, and now look at the amount of land under cultivation. She will become a land not only flowing with milk and honey, but with wine also, and all the fruits of the earth. She has passed through a period of severe distress, but her present prospects point to a more prosperous state resting on a more secure basis.

When the emigrants first came out under the agency of Mr. Jordan, labour was in great demand, in fact for a long time the supply was not *equal* to the demand, so large were the orders from the country, the cry always being *more*. Some of the emigrants who came brought money with them, and many of them commenced business in the towns, so that houses and land rents advanced, buildings were put up, &c.; but the temporary prosperity, for it could only be called that, which existed at the time, was mainly due to the expenditure of borrowed capital in the construction of public works, many of which were certainly of doubtful necessity; but doing any permanent good, such as forming the back-bone of the Colony, by giving inducement to the people to settle on the lands, was scarcely thought of. Those who at that time attempted farming were ruined—not ruined from natural causes, but because the land laws of that period

obliged the farmer to spend all his capital at one 'fell blow' in purchase-money, and fencing. We were still supplied with emigrants who poured in with every ship; but latterly, shortly before emigration was stopped, of what class? chiefly the refuse and scum of London, and the manufacturing towns, who landed on our shores totally devoid of both capital and character. The very worst of these shiploads were sent to the northern ports, as if any thing would be good enough for a new district; and I think I saw the biggest lot of "roughs" landed in the north that I ever saw collected in my life; they were no sooner out of the ship than they formed rings in the streets and stripped to fight; and this not by twos and fours, but by dozens; while others proved themselves accomplished thieves by relieving the townspeople of their watches and money.

About the time that these affairs were in themselves injuring the Colony, the Government supplies were suddenly stopped by the failure of the Agra and Masterman's banks, followed by the suspension of the Bank of Queensland, which caused the failure of numbers in both town and country; not only crippling the Government, but causing thousands to lose appointments, besides almost all the salaries being stopped. A reckless system had been going on of working on credit, and of course all this was



sufficient, and more than sufficient, to bring on the serious consequences which ensued, and in Brisbane there was even an attempt at a bread riot. It was the old story of a new country, and when the smash came, we found ourselves with a numerous unemployed and destitute population, a variety of expensive public works unfinished, an empty exchequer and a heavy debt.

However, "the tide turned at last," no matter how sluggishly, and a slight change for the better took place, trade certainly remained flat, but it was chiefly owing to the absence of that speculative spirit which had had such a hold on the Colony, and injured it to such an extent: the *check* had the effect of inducing many persons to reduce their indebtedness before undertaking fresh liabilities, and thus producing a sounder and more healthy state of trade. The facilities which the Insolvent laws afforded for applying the "white-washing" process in an easy manner encouraged the growth of a class of 'mushroom traders' without capital; this evil has cured itself lately, and people find it is not always safe to run into debt without being able to pay.

Some progress too was made in farming, and certain stupid or wicked assertions about what could or could not be done in the way of agriculture were completely upset: we had proved by

repeated experiments of the most conclusive nature that we could grow sugar as well and better than the West India Islands, wheat as well as Chili or California, and cotton as well as the Southern States of America: and even if the extent to which these things had been done was small, it was something to know that we could accomplish such work in Queensland.

Retrenchment in our expenditure was the first thing which suggested itself, but that could only go a small way to setting matters right, and our only hope in retrieving our position, and securing the future prosperity of the country, lay in applying the lands of the colony to agricultural purposes, by a liberal land law to induce people to settle on these lands, so that we should not only be giving a start to a settled population, but by growing sugar and cotton, wheat and ordinary farm produce, save many thousands of pounds sent annually out of the colony for these articles.

This conviction then having taken hold of the public mind, and being energetically advanced by the press, led to the Government passing an act (which I shall not dwell upon as it has been superseded by a better one, the most important parts of which will appear at the end of this work.) This act however was the first real movement towards

redeeming the land in the settled districts from the Squatter, and applying it to more profitable purposes, also hundreds of square miles in the railway districts were proclaimed as open for free selection for agricultural purposes.

It will be seen that that the new Land Bill gives every inducement and encouragement to intending settlers. All who consider the subject impartially, and understand it thoroughly believe that the colony will now steadily improve, and that it will attain to a sounder and more prosperous position than it has yet enjoyed. Emigration has been stopped, but if our emigrants would only bring with them those careful habits, which they were compelled to practise at home, they would benefit themselves, and the wealth of the colony would be enormously increased. And while there are many descriptions of persons for whom Queensland holds out no favourable prospect whatever, it presents to men of moderate capital and moderate tastes, willing to embark in sugar growing, cotton growing, or grazing, facilities for securing an honourable independence well worthy their consideration: and certainly to be considered in connexion with Queensland before turning their attention to the same interests in countries which are not only not connected with British Government, but where the settlers are laid open to the attacks of Indians and Guerillas, without any means of redress.



## CHAPTER II.

### GENERAL REMARKS.—BUSH, CAMPING OUT, ETC.

THERE are a certain class of men who do the colony an immense amount of harm by running it down everywhere, without having fairly judged it: they bring out a little money and a great many letters, receive a letter of introduction to a squatter in the north, rush up to the station, stay there two or three months, come back to Brisbane, and either get a Government 'billet,' or go home after having spent most of their money by living in town. I have seen many of these cases. I asked one man if he had seen or done anything in the Bush, "Oh yes, I did some 'foot rotting,'" was the languid reply. They abuse everything, and tell everyone that the climate in the north is atrocious, and the mosquitoes fearful, and as every one knows, it is not so much the *expressions* which are used in running down or praising anything as the *manner* in which it is done.

Then there are those who are travelling for pleasure, and visit Queensland "to have a look at it."

When asked their opinion about it, they generally remark that they "do not see the use of a man wasting five or six years of his life, &c."



Of *course* they don't, being the possessors of money and rich acres at home, and it is not for such men that I write. I write for those who possess a moderate capital, have no profession, do not wish to swamp the whole of their capital at home in a farm or anything else; while *steady*, are yet imbued with a spirit of adventure, who would be proud to help in opening up a new country, to feel, when most of the hardships are over, and they are commencing to reap the fruit of their labours, that they were among the first Pioneers!

My remarks will also apply to the labouring classes. Of course a man with a large capital will nearly always get on, or it is his own fault; and I *have* known cases where men have done well with no capital at all. But let no one get an idea into his head that he is going to make a fortune in a short time. I cannot imagine how so many lies ever got home, for I know that persons used to start with the inward belief that they were going to realize a fortune in a few years, and emigrant girls, as they have often allowed, left with the full conviction that they were sure to marry a "rich squatter." As "money" we know "makes money," I believe fully that a large capital judiciously laid out in the growth and manufacture of sugar-cane would in a very few years bring in a handsome fortune: but in no other

case connected with agriculture is it likely that a rapid fortune could be made. If a man would not be satisfied with making a comfortable home, everything his own, no rents or taxes to pay, and very likely getting a good interest for his money, but not *at once*, he had much better not come out.

Anyone coming out to Queensland must have great perseverance, and a determined character; and if he has not travelled in hot countries before he will stand doubly in need of these two virtues: for in travelling about in new districts, he will have to undergo privations, with the probability of experiencing some of the maladies of the Bush: the intending emigrant has the fact always strongly impressed upon him at home, that he will have to "rough it," which expression he *pooh poohs* at once, for the simple reason that he does not understand the meaning of the word: he knows that he can sleep on the *grass* as well as anywhere else, but he does *not* know of the many ills and annoyances that "flesh is heir to" in a new country, and which have caused many a man to turn tail. It may be asked, is it necessary to travel about and encounter these annoyances? My answer is *certainly*: how can a country be judged unless it is first thoroughly examined? how can a man settle down with any feeling of satisfaction without having first made

himself acquainted with the different districts, stations, and plantations, and the manner of working them?

I advise then a new arrival to place the bulk of his money in a bank, and to proceed north by one of the steamers; he can purchase horses for a very moderate sum at any port, and can then take a trip inland, or where he likes. I did this, and never regretted it, for I found both Squatters and Planters a most hospitable set, and none the less so because I presented myself without an introduction, for I took no letters up the country with me, indeed one is just as likely, and more so, to establish a friendship with a man in Queensland without these letters; and I can well understand it: for the receiver of the letter feels that he is supposed to do something for the bearer; if it is to a Squatter, he may not *want* you on his station. There are exceptions, but as a rule they are most unsatisfactory documents.

Squatters are by no means so anxious to have "new chums" on their stations, for the purpose of learning colonial experience, as is supposed: for they justly remark that they may get an idle man, or one who is above his work; or if they get a good man the chances are that he leaves just as he is getting most useful. This is chiefly my reason for advising anyone to travel about, for during the period of his



doing so he will doubtless be pressed to stay now and then for a few days or more, and during these periods can learn a good deal by keeping his eyes open; and let him also be ever ready to lend a helping hand, whether on Station or Plantation, in *whatever* work is going on.

To give an instance of what a persevering man may do who commenced with nothing—do not let it be thought that he made a fortune, very far from it, but he did better than taking either to that curse of the Colony, *drink*, or getting into a Government “billet,” which he could probably have got without coming 16,000 miles for. I knew a University man, who engaged himself, that is to say agreed with a Squatter to remain with him and work, commencing of course with no salary; this was when he first came out; he was immediately sent with a ‘mob’ of sheep to take up new country about 300 miles inland; he had a hard time of it during the journey up, but when he arrived at his destination the real hardships began; it would be too long to enumerate them all, suffice it to say that it was the wet season; he and his mate had to swim a creek with their flour, tea, and sugar, tied on their heads, this all became sodden and mixed together during the transit, and the ‘dampers’ baked out of this mess can be better imagined than described. Amongst other miseries



they were soon both "down" with fever and ague, and having no tent, nor in fact anything scarcely, were in a truly wretched condition. Being however of the 'Tapley type,' he managed to pull through all hardships; in two years was under-superintendent, and in another six months had entire management of a station carrying from 20,000 to 30,000 sheep; a good salary; no expenses as to living, and he did something in the way of horse-dealing; and when I saw him last he had a share in the station, which was in a very prosperous condition. Here was the case of a man remaining on *one* station and doing well; for though I could relate many cases where men have done much better under almost the same circumstances, yet I think this a fair sample to judge by; so that though advice may be given, a man must judge for himself, as to the course to be pursued on his arrival in Queensland, so much depends upon circumstances. To do nothing in a hurry is a golden rule to stand by; that is to say, to enter into *no* speculation till he knows something of the country and the people, no matter how lucrative it may appear; neither to join any one as a partner, nor to buy a share in any station or plantation, nor invest in mining shares or land, until he can, both by experience of his own and also that of competent persons, feel satisfied that the affair is all right.

These remarks will apply in the main to married men, who at the same time may rest satisfied that they can leave their wives and families in boarding-houses, which abound in every town, are exceedingly comfortable, and taken in connection with their accommodation, will be found to suit every one's purse. Yet it will at once be understood, that a man visiting the Colony by *himself* is more independent; and, where this is practicable, it might be better for him to do so; then, after visiting the various districts, to send for his family or not, as the chances of success seem for or against him. In this latter case, a long journey and disappointment *could* only extend to one member of the family. Now as to capital. According to the experience of many, it might be stated that a married man might live a glorious life in Queensland on £300 a year; but opinions differ; and the ideas of others would clash in this respect. However, all heads of families can take up land to the extent of 10,000 acres, at from 5s to 15s per acre, according to quality, and ten years are given to pay this sum in.

Now, for a sum of £2000, 500 acres of this land could be substantially fenced, a good house could be built, well sunk, and the paddock and out-buildings well stocked with horses, cows, pigs, poultry, &c.; besides many other things could be

procured which are calculated to make a home comfortable ; while it must be borne in mind that whereas *living* is cheap, *servants*, other than black, are expensive. Many single men possess perhaps no more than three or four hundred pounds,—in the case of these wishing to emigrate, I would recommend their joining, after due consideration, with others possessing about the same amount of capital, thus being enabled to take up a block of sugar land and erecting a mill according to their combined capital : or following up the cultivation of any crops they may deem worthy of their attention.

And let working men consider they *may* have many disappointments that they never bargained for ; they may go to diggings which by the latest accounts were yielding gold to everyone, and on reaching the spot find the place not only overdone, but many in the act of leaving, their alluvial claims having been worked out. They might hear of a station where shearers were wanted, the wages being from 4s to 4s 6d a score (sheep), and after “humping their drum” for many hot dusty miles, find there was no room for them. This is looking at matters in their worst light, but what is equally bad is the case of a hard working man who, having *made* good wages, receives his cheque and makes off for the first grog shop : his intention probably, and



a very natural one too, is to have a nobbler or two, not having tasted such a thing for some months : but let him exercise caution in entering these "shops." The new chum does not calculate on "doctored" grog, nor does he know the power of Australian brandy which is peculiar to these places. Many old hands know it, and go with the full intention of "knocking down their cheques" and themselves too. This however appears to be less in fashion than it was, and men working at yearly wages frequently put their money by in a bank, and eventually buy a block of land with it.

Money can at any time be lent out on mortgage on first rate security, at from 10 to 15 per cent. in Brisbane, but should be done only with the approval, and through the hands of a first rate solicitor.

I could give numerous instances of a new arrival being taken in, but the following will suffice : One individual went into partnership with an auctioneer only two or three weeks after landing ; the auctioneer's creditors at once came down on the new partner and he lost all. Another invested largely in a firm which "smashed" a few days afterwards ; while a third bought a piece of land in a hurry, which, judging from the *price*, would have been a bargain, but which turned out to be a swamp !

The Rev. William Draper, in one of his admirable



letters on emigration, bears me out in some of the above remarks ; his advice will in the main apply to all, but is particularly addressed to the working classes. He says, "Colonial experience ! what does it mean, cannot I use my own judgment, and try experiments on a small scale to see which plan or crop succeeds best ?"

Yes, you can, but experience is absolutely necessary : you may succeed or you may starve, the latter word is used comparatively, for no one is allowed to *starve* in Queensland ; but you may starve in the sense of losing all you have in the world. Will Colonial experience guarantee success ? No, not always, but it will at least largely administer to it. It will not compensate for indolence, neglect, bad health or want of strength. Nay, more, its inseparable companions must be industry, hard work, a good sound constitution, and a stout arm. And how is this Colonial virtue to be obtained ? 1st, by purchase, and the price is generally very high, viz., months, and years sometimes, of losses and want of success ; and 2nd, by honest labour on a farm for a few months. You will get Colonial experience cheaply in the latter way, and instead of diminishing your store you will add grist to the mill.

If you can, by all means hire yourself to some practical agriculturist, even though your wages be

nominal. You may get more than you expect, at all events you will not lose. This necessity settles the point with you perhaps:—you, to labour on a farm! never. Well, every experienced Colonist would say, do not turn away from a good thing for such a trifle. Of course you will readily understand that circumstances, position, means and character vary everywhere; so it is with society and character in Queensland: it is important that *some* attention be paid to the character of the man who may employ you, or certainly much misery may ensue, but in the main you may expect fair and honest treatment if you are industrious and willing to make yourself useful, for it is the interest of the employers to treat their people well. You may have to clear land, stump and fence, look after stock, plough, hoe, dig and plant, milk, fetch water, go to town with produce, look after pigs, &c.

You will have a humpie or cabin for yourself (and family if you have one), and perhaps a small plot of ground for yourself. Your rations will be 10lbs. of beef, 10lbs. of flour,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of tea, and 1lb. of sugar weekly. In some cases this is increased, and you can get additional rations for your wife and elder children, provided they can do any work.

But this method of gaining colonial experience is impracticable with some; their previous mode of

living, their position, and their general habits will not allow them to stoop to such a life; they have brought money with them, they can afford and they expect to lose a little; they have made up their minds to embark a certain capital on the land. Many have succeeded, why should *they* fail? It is possible to avoid very much of that which has led some to disappointment and ruin." He further remarks that "some old Colonists may dissent from these remarks."

I would add that all books find *some* who dissent from them; and that books referring to the Colonies are by no means exceptions.

#### BUSH—CAMPING OUT, ETC.

As a rule, on a place being described to an individual, he usually frames a picture of it in his mind, but before emigrating I never could do this with regard to the "Bush" in Queensland. At one time I had a hazy idea that it was a species of everlasting scrub, with here and there small glades opening out in it; this was probably suggested by the word "Bush," which I interpreted literally. I was then told by a Queenslander that it resembled a gentleman's park at home, while others gave different descriptions. Now the whole secret of it is, that



give what description you like, the Bush is so vast, that your description will apply to some part of it ; and while one, who had been living in one or the other of the Southern districts of Queensland all his life, would carry a report home that the Bush was composed of barren ridges with little water, and only here and there good country, and vegetation scanty ; another, having resided in a sea-coast district in the tropics would describe the country as being composed of vast well watered plains of rich soil covered with grass ; dense scrubs, consisting of Palms, wild Bananas, and luxuriant creepers, bordering these plains, and in fact the whole of vegetable life most luxuriant. So that if I was asked the same question that *I* asked some years ago, I should select one portion and one district for my description and describe that, and here I shall attempt this in a small way, with regard to a few of the districts I have been in. Let us take, for example, the Kennedy district, and let us suppose that we start from Port Denison with the intention of striking in a north-west course towards the Burdekin river.

After leaving the town and crossing two or three creeks which generally contain water, one passes through lightly timbered country with strong blady grass growing amongst it. When first "taken up" this sort of coast country generally grows grass

sufficiently high to hide both man and horse. The road then passes through boggy salt water flats, and on to a piece of "devil devil;" this is a curious name, and it is curious country, as anyone will find who attempts to ride through it too fast, unless mounted on a horse accustomed to it. It is simply one formation of holes and hillocks, in some districts of great depth and size; in this instance the hillocks about a foot high, with a net work of channels running about, and in and out of them. I have heard numerous reasons given as to how such a curious formation is caused, and as it is always found on flats, I believe this to be the correct one, that, in process of time after heavy and continuous falls of rain on these undrained flats, the earth is washed away, but the mounds are held together by the roots of the grass, for strong grass is usually growing on them, but scarcely any in the channels. After leaving this patch of "devil devil" the road enters upon a very large plain, which is bounded inland by a rugged black looking mountain; this plain stretches away as far as the eye can reach to the sea, only divided from the salt water by a narrow belt of scrub, the soil and grass on it are good on the mountain side, but nearer the coast the Blacks have dug it all up with their pointed sticks for yams—these sea coast plains are always favourite places of

the Blacks for digging roots. There are no trees on this plain, beyond one or two *Pandanus* growing about the foot of the mountain. Following the dray track we pass through lightly timbered country with here and there a small scrub, consisting of a species of wattle, the leaves of which bear a sweet scent. Squatter pigeons abound, and a kangaroo now and then hops away. Being a dry season the grass is not green but yellow; a few miles of this lightly timbered country are traversed, and some trees show in the distance much larger than usual, and the vegetation at their feet looks much greener: this shows that a creek is being approached. In this instance the creek is dry, but water would be found two or three feet underground by digging in its bed; the deep tap roots of these gigantic trees are in the water, and the grass being shaded is much coarser and greener. The trees in all these creeks consist chiefly of tea-trees, gums, *Leichardts*, &c., growing to a great size and affording shade.

If water can be found, a creek of this description is a very pleasant place for a noonday camp. The trees are full of cockatoos, parrots, laughing jackasses, and all sorts of smaller birds: white cockatoos are never very far from water.

If not in a great hurry, I certainly recommend camping in the middle of a hot day, it does both



man and horse good. On leaving the creek, more large plains are crossed, covered with grass, which is kept short by the cattle, and surrounded by belts of timber; emus will probably be seen on these plains. Large mountains are in the distance, timbered to their summits; and here and there smoke may be descried towards the sea. The coast is hidden by a belt of mangroves, but the smoke points out the presence of a camp of Blacks on the beach. Then more large plains are passed, with some fine lagoons about, covered with wildfowl; through belts of timber composed chiefly of gum, and Moreton Bay ash, to the banks of the Burdekin. The bank here is covered with a narrow belt of impenetrable scrub, consisting of evergreens matted together by innumerable creepers bearing small flowers, and enormous descriptions of beans. The dray track is cut through this scrub down a steep bank on to the white sand. The bed of the river here, from bank to bank, is about three quarters of a mile broad, and during a flood it is a grand sight to view the river from either bank. A species of dwarf tea-tree, bearing a scarlet flower, grows thickly in some parts of the bed. Here and there is a small stagnant water-hole, but the river, though running, is usually confined to a small stream about eighty yards across, and where the crossing is, it is only two or three feet

deep, though both above and below it the holes are of very great depth, and exceedingly dangerous to bathe in on account of alligators, which abound in the Burdekin. After crossing the river, the country is rather flat for a time, but the grass exceedingly rich.

The banks of the river going up stream, are high and steep, and you look down on deep clear water-holes, joined together by a tiny stream; small tea-trees and stunted river oak growing here and there in the beds. All these trees, and also large ones for some way up the banks, have a bend in their stems and branches down stream, owing to the pressure of the tremendous floods. The distance from Port Denison to this part of the Burdekin, is 75 miles. There is a curious piece of country, or rather water, some way back from this part of the Burdekin; it is a sheet of water of unknown extent, some parts deep, some shallow, but the whole covered thickly with tall reeds. Some parts of it are lined with thick scrubs, and in places arms of this lagoon run up into the scrub, black and still and cold looking, and without even the reeds to give them a brighter look. Round this water all sorts of native fruits abound, amongst others the wild banana. Numerous other large lagoons abound, and the district is well off for both game and fish.

CAMPING OUT.—Before starting on an expedition, the first thing to secure will be horses ; they can be bought for any price, but when choosing, be sure that the animal has not a sore back, nor a sore anywhere about his back or girth. Their legs stand the work well, but it is a very bad state of things to find your horse cringing when you mount him out in the bush, for you can then do no good by either placing the saddle cloth in different positions, or altering the stuffing of the saddle as long as you *ride* him. You will either have to leave him somewhere to recover—and he will undoubtedly be ridden in your absence—or you will probably bring him back with a running sore on his back the size of a saucer. If you do not see that your saddle is in good order before starting, you may give him a sore back yourself. Whilst on the subject, I may mention that it is perfectly useless to bring out an English saddle, however good the maker is. My decided opinion is that colonial saddles are best for man and horse in Queensland, and I gave a first-rate English one a fair trial.

A “new chum,” during his first journey into the bush, would be struck with the peculiar appearance of the eucalyptic, or gum-tree tribe, affording scarcely any shade, owing partly to their narrow leaves having all their edges turned outwards.



Then, being told he will at a certain point come to a creek or river, he probably gets very thirsty *en route*, but disdains the small waterholes, thinking of his clear running creek or river; but what is his astonishment and disgust on finding the said creek merely a dry sand bed. My advice to a new hand is that he should, before starting, not only make himself acquainted with the route, but also any particulars he can learn about the stations he is likely to pass; and if he has a mate who knows anything of the bush, he will find it better to camp out. Of course it depends on so many circumstances that I cannot give much advice about the matter, and wayside inns are increasing so fast that they will probably alter it all; but I have always preferred being entirely independent and camping out, which I like doing very much with a cheerful mate. In selecting a camp for the night, the first thing to find is water, and if in a creek, be sure to taste it before making any preparation for camping, for the creek may have some sort of communication with the sea or salt water flats, and the water be brackish; higher up the creek the water would probably be sweet. I 'believe' in being as comfortable as possible for the night, for after the long, hot, and sometimes monotonous rides in the day, a good night's rest is indispensable; I therefore recommend a tent, and,

what I consider to be of the very greatest importance, a mosquito net; this can be made with a hoop at the top, and you hang it in the roof of the tent. Many a good night's sleep has it ensured to me and others by the shelter it has afforded from those fearful insects. I have sometimes quitted it to go for a drink to the lagoon, and on lifting the pannikin to my lips, my hand has been black with mosquitos. You pitch your tent by fastening it to two young saplings, but be very careful that there is no dead tree nor rotten limb overhanging you. It is a good thing to take your horses down to the water before hobbling them out, and take a pannikin with you; you will thus give them a drink, so that they will have no excuse for hunting for water, and at the same time you can wash their backs down, which freshens them up wonderfully. A bell on one of them may save a deal of hunting in the morning. If a big log is handy, make your fire against it, as you may then rely on having a fire all night without having to be constantly feeding it; still it is as well to bring a few pieces of dry wood up before turning in for the night. If firearms are carried, they should be kept at night in the blanket alongside you; if you expose them, they will often miss fire the next day, however good the caps may be.

Early morning is a delightful time in the bush,

the laughing jackasses will wake you at sunrise, and often a mob of cockatoos will settle on the trees over the camp screeching loudly.

A knowledge of tracking would help you very much in finding the horses, but unfortunately it could hardly be learned at home; however, very strict attention, and constantly looking out for tracks of game will enable you to pick it up to a certain extent. Camping by oneself is lonely work. I recollect the first time I ever tried it, the night was very cold, I camped in the dry sandy bed of a creek, but dared not make a large fire, as the Blacks were in the neighbourhood. I nearly buried myself in the sand to keep warm, but though I succeeded in this, the moon was so full and bright, and there were such strange noises in a mountain under which I was camped, that I could not sleep, and heard the jingle of the horses' hobbles most of the night. I suppose I had been lying there about a couple of hours, when some black object whizzed through the air, and hit a tree close to where I was lying, with a heavy *thud*, and there remained, for I could see it against the white smooth bark of the Gum. Having been about three months in the Colony, I put this down as a boomerang hurled by a bloodthirsty Black. I kept my eyes on it, and grasped my revolver, preparing to sell my life dearly. I thought



it bad policy to move, as I argued it would discover my whereabouts ; but getting impatient, was preparing to get up, and in fact had already taken stealthy glances round about, when my supposed boomerang gave several heavy flaps, and was out of sight ! This was a flying-fox, a species of demon I had scarcely even heard of before. I immediately became so bold that I made up the fire at once, and went to sleep soon afterwards.

Long after this I was camped in a wild part of the "Kennedy" district with a friend, who had been over twenty years in the Colony. We knew the Blacks were bad, but we were well armed, and besides it was getting late, so we camped upon the first creek we stumbled on, for we did not know how far we might have to go to the next water. As we afterwards discovered, the bed of the creek was very scrubby, and quite dry for miles above where we camped. Above our waterhole there was a broad patch of sand, and then commenced the scrub, still in the bed of the creek ; below the waterhole the channel disappeared in a ravine. We made our fire under a log close to the water, so that we were some sixty yards from the scrub, or indeed from any real cover.

We had finished our supper of "Johnny cakes" and beef, and were talking in a low tone over pipes

and tea, previous to rolling ourselves in our blankets, when we both heard distinctly the cracking of sticks a long way up the creek, evidently caused by some object approaching cautiously. We immediately seized our arms and hurried away into the gloom, out of the light of the fire; there we both squatted, with our faces and revolvers turned up the creek, for by this time we could distinctly hear steps approaching, and even the rustling of small boughs. Every now and then we would cast a rapid glance around in other directions, but at length the steps approached the very brink of the scrub and stopped. We both thought, he is now reconnoitering; it was a moment of the most intense excitement; we held our breaths, and waited with muzzles pointed and fingers on the triggers for the big "Buck nigger" (or niggers), whom we were certain were within a few yards of us, when out from the scrub came a most wild shrill scream, followed immediately by the huge carcass of a wild bull!—who stopped immediately he was clear of the scrub, evidently perplexed by the sudden appearance of our *now* very small fire. We then fired at him, and with a yell almost equal to his own, rushed towards the beast, half crazed at being able to give vent to our long pent-up feelings. He went back through that scrub in a few bounds, and the next morning

we found traces of blood upon the ground and leaves. In some districts I have travelled a whole day and have not seen a single animal or bird of any sort, the only sign of life being the monotonous buzzing of a species of cricket which is very common in the bush: he lives in the trees, and the hotter the day the louder the chirrups, but it is impossible to see him. That species of bush known as "Grass-tree country," is disagreeable to ride through. Grass-tree resembles a fine rush on a rough short trunk; it throws out a tall straight stem with an enlargement on the top like a bulrush. It grows on stony ridges, where there is little grass; and this sort of country has always a bad name. I recollect passing through it during the whole of one day; this was in the North Kennedy district; there were quantities of a small sort of wallaby jumping about amongst the grass-trees.

The next day I came to a creek with a strong running stream in it; the bed of the creek was composed of one mass of basaltic rocks, getting larger and larger up stream. The vegetation was very rank and beautiful about the river, which was full of fish, and the contrast to the sterile country I had just quitted so refreshing, that I camped on this stream for some days.

Another time I was on my way to the Suttor river



from Port Denison, our route lay more to the west than the Burdekin road. At first we passed through Brigalow scrubs, forest country, and rich black soil plains, where the grass was exceedingly green, till at the end of the second day we arrived at the Bowen river. This river has also an enormous bed, and except in time of floods, consists of large water-holes, or lagoons joined by a tiny stream. As far as the river, we had followed the regular dray track; we camped on a high bank above the stream. The next morning two of our horses were missing, and as we spent two days on the river and back country hunting for them, I was able to note the nature of the district pretty closely.

The first day we passed through all sorts of country, sometimes riding over level ground, consisting of sandy soil, studded with ironbark, small gum-trees, bloodwood, &c., then on to a "flat" without any trees on it, and but little grass, evidently swampy in wet weather. This "flat" took us to a dry sandy creek, huge tea-trees growing along its banks. The grass here had been burnt some weeks ago, and the young shoots were springing up. This is known in the bush as "burnt feed." The Moreton Bay ash is common about the creek, and in fact almost over the whole of Queensland. It may easily be known by its having a rough scaly bark for some

ten or twenty feet up its stem, after that it is as smooth and polished as a gum. On leaving the creek we took a turn under some hills which had scarcely any vegetation on them, but were covered with stones of a reddish colour. A small chain of waterholes commenced here and continued for several hundred yards. It depends upon the nature of the country, but as a *rule* these small disconnected waterholes, on being followed up, are found to end in a lagoon. After passing through numerous scrubs, our further progress was stayed by a deep rocky ravine. We got back to camp at dark, without having been successful in finding the horses; and not finding them the next day, and being pressed for time, we were obliged to continue our journey; arriving at the foot of the Leichardt range during tremendous heat, we camped for an hour. The road over the range is still steep, but well made. An extensive view, but neither a very grand nor pretty one, is obtained from the top; merely peaks of mountains all round, and a Black's fire in one of the gorges. From the top of the pass for two or three miles the country is worthless: small *broad-leaved* ironbark growing over it; this as a rule denotes poor country; while silver-leaved ironbark on the contrary shows good country. So does also the Bottle-tree.

The next day we pass Mount Wyatt, and observe signs of copper, portions of the ore lying on the surface of the ground. From here to the Suttor the country is ugly and unpleasant riding, passing through poor country and numerous scrubs.

The Suttor has a broad bed, large trees in it, and little water. We camped for a week on various parts of the river's bank, hunting for horses.

The heat was intense ; water-holes drying fast, and leaving quantities of fish, which were preyed upon by dingos, guanassas, hawks, &c. One day the heat was so great that some emus under the shade of a scrub only trotted gently away on our riding at them, and let us approach within about fifteen yards.

The bed of the Suttor where we were hunting was very broken, and showed the existence of previous tremendous floods ; by the way large trees were hurled in every direction, by the uneven nature of its bed, and by the drift jammed into the high forks of trees still standing. A tree was found in some part of this river marked L, supposed to be a trace of the unfortunate Leichhardt.

Camping in the bush, however, is not always so pleasant, and may be attended with very serious consequences, though the following adventure gives an instance where we all escaped :—

It was some months after the trip to the Suttor



just mentioned that four of us started (a long way farther north) to look for new country. We had come suddenly upon a mob of 'Miall Blacks.' The term Miall denotes Blacks who are perfectly wild. They were fishing in a lagoon, and, on perceiving us, dropped their little hand nets, and ran off to some distance. We were particularly careful not to interfere with them in any way, though our 'black boy' was most anxious to pursue them; and, being denied that pleasure, requested leave to take some of their fish, which request was refused; so we passed on, thinking they would resume their fishing and take no further notice of us. However, as it afterwards proved, we were mistaken. We camped towards evening, and were particular in selecting a very open camping ground, there being no cover within a quarter of a mile of us; in fact, we had to go some way to cut two saplings for pitching our tent, and to fetch wood for the fire. In the middle of the night our black boy got up for a drink of water, but had hardly reached the door of the tent when he hurried back, seized a carbine, and woke us; in fact, we woke as he seized his piece, and, grasping our firearms, hurried after him.

The Blacks had formed a ring round us, and were evidently intending to close in upon us; they were painted, as is usual on these occasions, in the most

horrible way; white lines drawn down their thighs and shins and across their ribs, and patches of white daubed on their jaws and cheek-bones, giving them the appearance of skeletons; there was just sufficient light to see this. Directly we fired they all took to flight, nor could we see a sign of them a minute afterwards, though we rushed in the direction in which they vanished. We found a spear driven through a corner of the tent as a reminiscence. We noticed even in the excitement that one carbine made a report like a cannon, throwing the "gunner" backwards, and belching forth a perfect volume of flame. We discovered the next day that the owner had left the "stopper" or "plug" in the muzzle and fired it off in this state. He was spared any chaff, for we believed that it was chiefly owing to the deafening roar of his piece that the Blacks decamped so quickly. We could discover no signs of our having struck any. Watch was kept during the remainder of the night, but they did not venture again.

It may be as well to make a few remarks about the water in this new colony of Australia. Queensland is said to be one of the best watered colonies of the whole continent, but I have noticed that the supply is very unequally distributed, for while one district rejoices in large lagoons, which never dry

up, perhaps the next is so short of water that there is scarcely sufficient for the wants of the station hands; and both cattle and sheep have to be taken away altogether to where 'feed' and water are plentiful. People in England would be astonished at the colour of the water that is often drank in Queensland; clay pit water gives the best idea of it. I once asked an old woman whether I should find good water during a certain stage I was going. "No," she said, "the water is very bad, but it makes beautiful tea," and so it proved. Another time I was looking for water (by moonlight) till past two in the morning in a deep creek, when I found a waterhole nearly dry; in fact, so little water was there that I had to dip the pint pot in carefully to fill the *quart*, for fear of disturbing the mud. This, however, is a common occurrence, but take care your horses do not find such a place before you; if they do, you will get no water there, and hunting for it at night is miserable work after a long hot day.

Another time I was travelling through a scrub fifteen miles long. I had found no water for several long hours, excepting a little puddle or two on the track, for there had been a small shower of rain in the night. I tried to drink this, but it was literally too hot; when I came suddenly upon a clear spring of running water. I jumped off, took a great mouth-



ful, and found the spring to be the very essence of salt!—and this more than eighty miles from the sea. I have camped close to rocks where the water has collected in the crevices, but gum leaves had fallen in, and being of a strong aromatic flavour, had made a sort of bitter concoction. The yellow, muddy water will often gripe one, but often no other is to be found.

Creek water is always good, unless near the sea; but small water-holes are frequently rendered very disagreeable by cattle frequenting them; and in the morning I have noticed a dead beast in the water-hole from which I had made my tea the previous night. Lagoon water I have always found good, but with a weedy taste. In taking a drink from water which does not run, dip the pannikin down the length of your arm, and *under* any log that may be at the edge in the water; bring it quickly up, and you will find the water cold.

Near the sea good sweet water may generally be found by digging a few feet down above high water mark, and a few miles inland by sinking twenty or thirty feet; the rains on the coast are frequent, on the western side of the coast range they are not so regular, and squatters often secure a large supply of water by the formation of dams.

Water is almost always found at the roots of the

Tea-tree, also in the Bottle-tree, in the soft trunk of which the Blacks cut holes, where the water lodges and rots them to the centre, forming so many artificial reservoirs. On their hunting excursions afterwards, when thirsty, they tap them one or two feet below the old cuts and procure an abundant supply. A large lump growing on the trunk of the apple tree supplies water, and it is also found in hollow limbs of trees.

Cattle will drink very brackish water in Queensland, and I know a water-hole about four miles up the river Don, which is too salt for a man to drink, however thirsty, and where cattle water every day, in preference to a sweet water-hole close by.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE AREA OF QUEENSLAND—CLIMATE, ETC.

It is not an idle boast to state that Queensland is the largest of the British colonies, possessing, as it does, an area nearly double that of Canada and equal to about one-fifth of the whole of Europe and its dependencies; it will thus be seen that there is ample room for a considerable increase to her population, without their being in each other's way. The Colony comprises the whole north-eastern portion of the Australian continent. Its seaboard commences at Point Danger on the eastern coast, and extends northerly to Cape York, a distance of 1550 miles, and thence westerly along the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, to a point where the 138th meridian of east longitude intersects the same.

It is not necessary to furnish a description of the southern and western boundaries, as without a plan they would be unintelligible; but it may be remarked that some of the settlements in the interior are fully 600 miles from Brisbane, which will give some idea of the extent of country contained within her limits. The area of Queensland is about 678,500 square miles, which at present (1868) gives an average of



six and three-quarter square miles to each member of the population. A very large proportion of the country is of first-class character, and equal to any that is found in the southern portion of the continent; but it is to be expected that some time must elapse before the boundless tracts which are now devoted to sheep and cattle will present the appearance of being occupied in any other way. Considering the immense area of Queensland, and the inaccessibility, owing to distance from the seaboard of a large proportion of her territory, it is a subject of surprise that so much of it should be occupied; but settlement had extended in an unprecedented way up to the year 1866, until in fact the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria were reached.

*Population.*—The number of persons in the Colony, so far as it can be computed up to the latest is about 100,000. This shows a great increase compared with the population seven or eight years ago; for the purpose of showing the annual increase, the following statement has been prepared:—

Population on 31st December, 1861 . . . .		34,367
”	” 1862 . . . .	45,077
”	” 1863 . . . .	61,467
”	” 1864 . . . .	74,036
”	” 1865 . . . .	87,775
”	” 1866 . . . .	96,172
”	” 1867 . . . .	100,000

*Climate.*—There is more nonsense talked about the climate of Queensland, than there is about almost anything else connected with it, even to the mosquitoes, but those who abuse the climate can have had no experience in other hot countries.

A strong healthy looking man was once complaining to me about the heat, saying he had been two years in the country but could not stay in it on account of the hot summer. Judging from his appearance the question was needless, but I put it to him, has the heat ever injured you in any single way? “No,” he replied, “but I am afraid it *will* do so.” Here was an absurd answer.

I myself have been in the hottest districts, and not by any means shirking the heat, but both riding and working during the full blaze of summer for more than four years, and not only did it never hurt me, but I never was so well during any period of my life, and, with the exception of two or three Bush maladies of a trifling nature, did not experience a day’s sickness the whole time.

Those towns which are built a long way up the rivers, such as Brisbane, Maryborough, and Rockhampton, I have invariably found to be worse, both for heat and mosquitoes than any part of the Bush; and as the first experience of the “new chum” is naturally in one of these towns, this is the reason

that such dreadful reports are spread about and sent home. January is an exceedingly hot month, and the first or second week in it is invariably hotter by a *very* long way than any other week during summer. However, the climate though hot, is salubrious, and is not found to be unsuitable to the English constitution. The dryness of the atmosphere is its distinguishing feature, rendering it more healthy than it would be in similar latitudes where there is greater humidity.

In all ranks and conditions of life there are to be found persons who have resided for many years in the Colony exhibiting a vigour and health equal to that enjoyed in any other part of the world.

Where attention is paid to a proper system of living, coupled with pure air and cleanliness, health can be secured with less risks than are attendant on a residence in colder climates. The temperature seldom attains that extreme height that is experienced in Victoria and South Australia during the hot winds to which those colonies are liable. The nights are as a rule cool, which is a great source of revival after the heat of the day.

The rainy season occurs during Christmas time, and for a longer or shorter period before and after. But the perfection of weather is during winter, viz.: the three months of June, July, and August; there



is generally an absence of rain, the days are bright and cloudless, and the air balmy: nothing can be imagined more delightful than the temperature at this season of the year, which is not too warm to preclude active exercise during the day, while the nights, even in the tropics, are absolutely cold.

Everyone is invigorated by the bracing effects of this season, and lays in a new stock of health and strength to withstand the summer heats. Much could be added to show that Queensland possesses a climate not inferior, though differing in some respects from those of the other portions of Australia; but enough has been advanced to give a general idea of its character. The mean annual temperature of Brisbane, from observations taken during the last few years, is found to be about  $67^{\circ}$ , which nearly agrees with that of Funchal, in Madeira, only in the latter case the climate is more equable, and not subject to such a great range of temperature.

It is a curious fact, but nevertheless true, that such a thing as a dog going mad *never* was heard of in Queensland, nor for that matter I believe in any part of Australia.

I have felt the heat more oppressive in both north and south Africa, and also at Malta, than ever I did in tropical Queensland in the Bush.

*Maladies incidental to Climate.*—I have noticed

that the few maladies that are peculiar to the Colony are nearly always incurred in new districts: and I know, from experience, that one rarely escapes them in new country. This applies particularly to fever and ague. It is the prevailing opinion that wet brings this on; this is true to a certain extent; but I have known many cases, where men have had it, who had not seen rain for months, nor had they camped out; but then they were in *new* country. Before the country is "taken up" there is something in the air or in the rank grass that breeds it. The first symptoms are usually a peculiar headache, a feeling of lassitude and an inclination to yawn and stretch. The shaking-fits commence every other day at a certain time and continue till sunset, when the fever commences and lasts far into the night, often accompanied by delirium. One thinks nothing of the "shakes" after a while, one simply prepares for them on the "bad day" with blankets, rugs and fires; but the fever at night is very bad, making the patient very despondent and causing great thirst.

Quinine, of course, is the standard remedy; but some never fairly shake off the ague without change of air, going into a more settled district. Always beware of getting wet, for this will bring it on again, and if the "bad day" overtake you while travelling by yourself, take care how you get off your horse

while the fever is on you, for it often weakens one so much you might not be able to get on again. It caught me one night before I could reach my destination. My pack-horse, as though he did it purposely when he knew he had a chance, bolted into the bush; I was too weak to follow him, so let him "rip," and rode on slowly to a fire, not caring whether it were a Black's or not. It turned out, however, to be the camp of some hawkers, who helped me to dismount, took the one horse and caught the other. Here I had hot coffee, a large fire, and a camp under the dray, and next day, being my "well day," I continued my journey as well as ever. I shall always remember the name of those good Samaritans, Laridge, with gratitude.

There are numerous fever and ague medicines advertised, but I cannot in justice quit the subject without recommending that made and sold by Mr. Berkeley, of Queen-street, Brisbane. I took some into the bush in a concentrated form, a few doses completely cured the disease in every instance in which I tried it, and often prevented its coming on. No one should be without it, and he should guard that glass bottle as his life in all his wanderings. The "mixture" is black, and contains quinine amongst other ingredients; however, whatever it is composed of Mr. Berkeley makes no secret of it.



I always, in the bush, keep a large bottle of this, a bottle of chlorodine (Collis Brown's), a wonderful medicine; the strongest essence of ammonia, also sulphate of zinc for the eyes, all in glass-stoppered bottles. With these you are pretty safe anywhere.

*Land Scurvy*.—This is better known in Queensland by local names, which do not sound very pleasant, such as "Barcoo rot," "Kennedy rot," according to the district it appears in. There is nothing dangerous about it; it is simply the festering of any cut or scratch on one's legs, arms, or hands; a mosquito bite even may cause one of these sores; they take months to heal, and sometimes break out where there has never been any wound. The hands are usually more subject to it than any other part of the body; nearly every one gets a touch of it in the bush. Want of vegetables is assigned as its cause, and certainly it is not found on plantations or in towns; it is difficult to get rid of it whilst one remains in the bush.

*Sandy-blight* occurs generally in sandy districts in the North Kennedy; it may be avoided by ordinary care, and washing the eyes after a hot ride through sandy country. It is a species of mild ophthalmia.

*Low Fever* sometimes appears in new districts,

but I have seen very few cases of it. If a man has a strong constitution and does not *drink*, he need fear no illness in Queensland, except running the chance of getting one of the above, if he goes into new country.

## CHAPTER IV.

### GENERAL FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY.

THE general features of the country are favourable to pasturage, especially in the interior, where the atmosphere is dry and the rains infrequent; this does not apply to the coast, as far as sheep are concerned, where the wet seasons are more constant and the climate more equable during the year. The rivers are seldom navigable for any great distance from the coast, though in the river Brisbane a distance of forty miles in a direct line from its mouth can be attained by steamer.

The range dividing the waters flowing to the east from those flowing to the west defines in a very decided way the line of demarcation between two classes of country; one of which, that on the western waters, is considered superior to the other; this is unquestionably true of the Darling Downs district, which is unequalled in any of the colonies for its excellent pasturage and beauty. There are many parts of Queensland equally of excellent quality, but none as yet so conveniently situated; and it is to be hoped that some day this district, which gives quite a distinctive character to the



southern portion of the colony, and has been for the last four years the battle-field of land legislation, will provide homes for a numerous and thriving population. The country on the western side of the range is best for sheep, that on the east for cattle, and *agriculture*, owing chiefly to the greater fall of rain.

Several thriving settlements are now making a name for themselves along the entire coast of Queensland. I will commence at the pastoral district of Burke in the far north, then following the coast line, and coming down south, will take a glance at the various settlements "en route."

The district of Burke embraces the entire area of that portion of the Gulf country which is watered by the rivers Albert, Leichhardt, Norman, and Flinders, and comprises the very best country in the northern portion of the territory; it is separated from the Kennedy district by the Gilbert ranges.

The district of Burke is eminently adapted for stock of all sorts, it consists chiefly of black soil plains, open downs producing grasses of the best description, amongst which the well-known blue and barley grasses largely abound; the land for the most part is elevated, ranging from 1,600 at the heads of the rivers to about 400 to 500 feet above the sea at the distance of a few miles from the shore.

There are plenty of herbs which stock thrive on, such as "salt-bush," "native leeks," "wild cucumber," and "carrots." The climate is favourable to sheep farming, and combined with the rich pasturage, ought to produce sheep of large carcass.

It is stated that fat wethers bring 30s a head at Calcutta. Sheep might be shipped at the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria by screw steamer, if anyone has the capital and pluck to run one, for Calcutta, a distance of some 3,500 miles, taking advantage of the intermediate markets, if found desirable, of Batavia and Singapore; or stock might be driven across to such parts as Rockingham Bay, Cleveland Bay, or Port Denison for the southern markets. In the event of communication with India horses would be found a source of profit.

The black soil flats extending along the banks of the navigable rivers, together with the coast reserve extending back three miles from the sea margin, will be found admirably adapted for growing sugar and other tropical productions. With the introduction of suitable labour, this district of Queensland alone would probably outstrip the colony of Natal. From the head-quarters of the principal rivers to within a few miles of the coast, the rich plains before alluded to extend without break. When fully occupied the district will be capable of depasturing three or four



millions of sheep, and at least two hundred thousand horned cattle and horses, and when fencing is introduced 50 per cent. additional upon the estimate. The township (Burketown) is on the Albert river. At the beginning of 1867 there were about 120,000 sheep and 15,000 head of cattle in the district. The Electric telegraph is being completed to the Gulf, having already (in 1868) reached to Rockingham Bay, the latter place being 360 miles from Burketown.

During the first autumn the country was found to be unhealthy, and subject to a kind of low fever, which, however, is disappearing as the districts become settled. Opposite the mouth of the Albert, about twenty miles, is Sweers Island, where there is excellent anchorage for any number of the largest ships. The Government has been petitioned to erect a free port there, which it is supposed will afford facilities for the development of an important trade with the southern portions of the Indian Archipelago.

*Somerset or Port Albany.*—This was the rendezvous which poor Kennedy gave, and which he never lived to see. It is a snug little bay, almost land locked by Albany island; opposite this, and lining the shores of a small sandy cove, is the town of Somerset, which, however, only consists of the Go-



vernment's residence, the Marines', and a few smaller houses. It can never be much of a settlement if it has only to depend on its own resources, for there is little back country to support it; but it will become of very great commercial importance, for situated right on the north-east extremity of Australia, it bids fair to be a most important half-way house and coaling depôt on the high road between Australia, the Pacific, and India; and whenever steam communication is established with India and England, *viâ* Torres Straits, on a firm footing, as it undoubtedly will be, so that we can not only trade with Batavia, India, and the rich islands of the Archipelago, but also have a much quicker communication with England, then will Somerset be of the first importance. The last-mentioned route was tried, but failed after one or two trips, chiefly for want of funds; but during the short time that it survived, the communication between England and Australia was wonderfully rapid, by means of the telegrams conveyed by the boats. When the telegraph is completed as far as Burketown, it would not be such a vast undertaking to carry it across to Adam's Bay, and from thence up the Archipelago to meet the Indo-European line, so as to place the whole of Australia in direct communication with England. Somerset is a free port, the first settler

arrived there in 1864. Mr. Jardine owns a cattle station there, but there is not much room besides for pastoral development. The Imperial Government partly maintains the cost of this settlement with Queensland.

*Rockingham Bay.*—The township of which is named Cardwell, is the next port; it has a good harbour, fine pastoral country at its back, consisting of the upper portions of the Burdekin river, also the Valley of Lagoons belonging to Messrs. Scott and Dalrymple, who were the original explorers in this district.

The agricultural land is first-class; some twenty miles or so from the coast it consists of rich plains of great extent and well watered.

Mr. J. E. Davidson has a sugar plantation here, and doubtless, since sugar growing and agriculture generally have proved so thoroughly successful in Northern Queensland, these plains will be entirely "taken up" before many years are over.

*Cleveland Bay.*—Townsville is the name of the settlement. In 1864 I was camped for some weeks on the site of what is *now* a flourishing township, *then* a wild bay where the white man had hardly ever set his foot, and infested by a bad tribe of Blacks. Captain Towns of New South Wales was the first to furnish the means of starting the present settle-



ment, which now boasts of two banks, besides numerous stores and hotels. The back country is first-class, and the port is at present the favourite one of the New Cape Diggings. The gentleman above-mentioned owns a considerable portion of the town property, besides a plantation, and "boiling down" establishment in the neighbourhood. The latter is built on a very extensive scale, and with the latest improvements; it is for the purpose of boiling down the carcasses of cattle, for the fat to make tallow with, and also for curing meat. The site selected for the manufactory is really a pretty spot. Situated on the banks of the Ross river at the extremity of a large open plain, it commands a view of the mountainous peaks of Castle Hill to the north, the rugged range of Mount Stuart to the south, and the "Ben Lomond" of Queensland, Mount Elliot, to the eastward, towering up to a height of 5000 feet.

These boiling down establishments offer a market to holders of stock, and a relief to those who wish to realize and have no market for their fat or aged stock. The present high price of tallow is a further inducement to erect them.

Cotton growing has succeeded very well at Cleveland Bay, while the cultivation of sugar cane has not been so successful.



*Bowen* is built at the head of an excellent and beautiful harbour called Port Denison. The town is well laid out with broad streets, and contain about 1000 inhabitants. The soil about the township is sandy, but is better along the banks of the Don river, two or three miles inland, where excellent cotton has been grown, and the Bowen Sugar Company (Limited) was formed in 1866. The back country is good for pastoral purposes, and its mineral wealth is being opened up, consisting of gold and copper chiefly. As far as these latter resources are concerned, the prospects of this district are exceedingly good; but with the exception of cotton growing, *agriculture* has not succeeded either at Townsville or Bowen.

*Mackay* is the most southern port in the "Kennedy district," which boasts of four sea-ports, the other three having been just described, namely, Cardwell, Townsville, and Bowen.

Mackay is situated on the south bank of the Pioneer river, and about a mile from the sea. The population is little more than 100 in the town itself; but its progress, though slow, has been sure; and the district now bids fair to take the lead of the whole colony with regard to its plantations. The country at the back or west of the range is excellently adapted for sheep and cattle, but that to the

east is so singularly favoured by nature, both as to climate and soil, that it is destined before long to be one of the most flourishing, if not *the* most flourishing, agricultural district in Queensland; I mean, of course, more particularly with regard to tropical agriculture; for, though first-rate samples of both wheat and oats have been grown at Mackay during the winter season, it is for its production of sugar, maize, &c., that it is becoming so deservedly famous. So little has been done in the cause of agriculture, that it is only within the last three years that anything beyond a market garden or two has been started in the district, which now boasts of at least five settled plantations, together with numerous small farms springing up in every direction. It is a curious fact that while droughts have prevailed inland, and both north and south, the district of Mackay has never suffered from them. Heavy rains may be relied upon for certain at Christmas time, sometimes extending for two or three months; and throughout the year genial showers fall with great regularity. Owing to this fact the entire country is covered with a rich growth of grass, and the most luxuriant vegetation prevails everywhere until the range is reached, at which point the rains often stop abruptly. Water of the best description can always be found by sinking 20 or 30 feet and often less;



there are also several running streams, of which the Pioneer river is by far the largest. This is one of the most beautiful rivers in Queensland; various clear streams, resembling so many English trout streams, contribute to its source, from whence for thirty or forty miles it is a blue sparkling stream, sometimes rushing between high banks of forest land; its bed dotted here and there with miniature islands of rock covered with lichens and shrubs, sometimes settling into a deep, still looking reach, where the surface of the water is covered with the gigantic pink and white water-lilies, looking out from their cool, broad leaves; the banks on each side covered with a thick verdant growth of tropical scrubs and vines, while quandang trees and tall feathery palms rear their heads above everything. Within six miles of the sea the river runs between bold cliffs of rock, from the summit of which one can look down and see the fish in its clear depths; and then come the "Falls," where the channel makes a descent, though not a very abrupt one, and where it is cut up into hundreds of brawling streams by islands of shrubs. In some spots whole groves of nothing but palms grow along the banks of the Pioneer, and they have a beautiful effect. The tide affects the river as far as the "Falls." The scrubs on each side abound with beautiful birds. The river



itself contains quantities of excellent fish, and its waters are the resort of various sorts of ducks.

Sugar canes of a twelvemonth old, grown on the best plantations of Moreton Bay, have been compared with those of the same age grown at Mackay, and the difference in size (and in saccharine matter) has been so much in favour of the latter that it could hardly be credited, on placing the two canes side by side, that they were the same age. Maize, too, grown at Mackay has always commanded a higher price in the market than that sent up from Sydney.

The various owners of the plantations are gentlemen of great experience, having been for years amongst the sugar plantations of the West Indies, Mauritius, and Java, who would not settle down on the land, nor extend their operations as largely as they are doing without having unbounded confidence in the capabilities of the soil, &c. It will perhaps scarcely be credited that all the English vegetables are grown here as large and as perfect in flavour as they are at home, and with little trouble connected with their culture. It so happens that I can speak of the agricultural capabilities of this district from actual experience; and though I consider that, with all fairness, too much cannot be said about it, I shall still be exceedingly careful not to exaggerate in one single fact: a maxim I have endeavoured to adhere

to when mentioning any matter connected with the colony; and anyone who is himself competent to judge of these matters by personal experience, and differing in opinion with me, must simply put it down to difference of opinion, for were I even *inclined* to commit to writing an exaggeration or a loosely gleaned notion, I should be deterred in this instance from the knowledge that this is the very thing that has done a vast deal of harm to the country.

Later on I shall attempt to describe the life on a plantation, but will now proceed to the next township.

*Broadsound* is at present a carrier's post, being used largely by the Peaks Downs Copper Mining Company, as a shipping port for the ore. I cull a few remarks from the Port Denison Times Almanack, a most useful and carefully compiled production, concerning this mine. "This property is in the hands of a Sydney proprietary: twenty tons of copper a week have sometimes been turned out; this could be raised to thirty tons, equal to 1560 tons per annum, were there always a prospect of getting the metal to port. The cost of raising the ore is within £2. 1s per foot, which is not more than one-third the amount required in some of the most profitable mines of South Australia. During the



first three quarters of the year 1866, 350 tons of copper left the mine for the port, which at £60, its minimum value on the mine, was worth at least £21,000. The rate of carriage current about that time was £20 uploading from Rockhampton, and £10 from Broadsound to Clermont; while wool and copper as down-loading was taken at £13 to £14. There are about 300 men employed at the mine." There is also plenty of gold in the district, particularly about the township of Clermont, but the droughts have been so prolonged, causing such a scarcity of water that the operations of the diggers have been much retarded. The steamer lands passengers and cargo at a wharf four miles from the township of Broadsound. The rise and fall of tide here is from 20 to 36 feet.

*Rockhampton* is a most important town, with a very large extent of excellent pastoral country at its back. It has no agricultural land, though fine oranges, grapes, pines, Bananas and other *fruits* are grown in gardens on the north side of the river, opposite the town. The Morinish gold diggings are within 28 miles of the town; the Rosewood diggings about 46.

There are good hotels and shops, but the town is badly situated, built on a 'flat'; a huge mountain overlooking one side, and a range the other, and



being thirty miles up a river, little air can get to it.

There are however pleasant residences on the Ranges at the back of the town. A railway is completed to Westwood, a distance of thirty miles, and from these the line has been surveyed to the river Dawson, following a central route through the rich pastures of the Leichhardt, which will equally open up communication with the Peak Downs, and Western Downs, in the Mitchell district.

*Gladstone* has one of the best harbours in the north. The town is built at the head of the harbour; it is small, but prettily situated on the slopes of a wooded hill, and is an exceedingly healthy spot. The Caliope gold diggings are within 15 miles of it.

*Maryborough*. Another town situated 30 miles up a river, the scenery of which is pretty on nearing the town. This is *the* great timber district of Queensland. The cedar, hardwood, and pine which abound up the river and its tributaries are floated down in rafts, and cut up for building purposes by large saw mills erected at the township. The price of the timber naturally fluctuates, but it costs *about* ten shillings per 100 feet per pine, and fifteen shillings for hardwood. The district is in a most flourishing condition, and Maryborough is the port of the Gympie Creek diggings, from which place about

4000 ozs. of gold arrive every fortnight. The soil on the river is excellent; there are numbers of farms, a large and flourishing sugar plantation, with mill in full working order; and other mills being erected. Messrs. Tooth and Cran have a meat-curing establishment here. The back country consists of the rich Burnett district, which has been "taken up" for more than twelve years by a most hospitable set of squatters. Gayndah is the chief town, between which place and Maryborough there is telegraphic communication. Two or three coal seams have been discovered near the latter town, so that steamers always find a ready supply.

BRISBANE—GOVERNMENT, ETC.

*Brisbane.* The capital of Queensland is prettily situated upon an elbow of the river of that name, and about thirty miles from the sea. The river is about a quarter of a mile broad at the town. Some of the suburbs are large, as Fortitude Valley, Kangaroo Point, South Brisbane, &c. The town is well supplied with water and gas; the population is over 7000, and rapidly increasing.

The Parliament House, Town Hall, and Banks are fine buildings, built of stone, which is quarried in the river bank. A fine bridge across the river is in course of erection, connecting North and South Bris-

bane from the head of Queen-street, which is the main street of the town. The Press is well represented, and the "Queenslander", may be mentioned as being a most useful and reliable weekly paper; the "Daily Guardian," is also excellent.

There are pretty rides and drives outside the town, such as Breakfast Creek, Kelvin Grove. Sandgate is a popular watering-place, a few miles from Brisbane. Cleveland is about twenty miles off, and is greatly resorted to for the benefit of the sea air, and also for the sake of seeing some of its sugar plantations; that of the Hon. Louis Hope is celebrated everywhere, and deservedly so, for he is the pioneer of the cultivation and manufacture of sugar in Queensland.

The Botanical Gardens of Brisbane are well worth visiting, they contain every sort of beautiful flower and rare fruit, sixteen sorts of sugar cane, and all sorts of tropical productions, growing in perfection, owing to the careful management of the curator, Mr. Walter Hill, a gentleman who is good enough to afford any information connected with Botany; also which districts are suitable for the various shrubs, plants, and cereals; and from his great experience in the Colony, his hints are most valuable. Mr. Hill is also Colonial Botanist, and selector of Agricultural reserves.



*Government, &c.*—As in the other colonies of Australia, there are in Queensland two Legislative Houses, the Assembly and the Council, there being thirty-two members in the first, and twenty in the latter. The members of the Assembly are elected by the people; those of the Council by the Governor, who is appointed by the Crown.

The Executive consists of a President (the Governor), Vice-President (Colonial Treasurer), and four members. The franchise is easy; to exercise it a man must either receive a salary of £100 a year, or pay £10 a year for lodging, or be in possession of a freehold worth £100, &c.

There are about twenty clergymen of the Church of England in Queensland, and about the same number of Roman Catholic clergy, with a Bishop at the head of each section. The other sections of the Church are well represented, and nearly all are supported by voluntary contributions, which system appears to succeed admirably.

There is a Board of Education and numerous schools; some are private, and others supported by the Government.

The back country (of Brisbane), is very large and valuable, comprising the splendid Darling Downs, together with large tracts of cultivated land. Ipswich, a town some few miles up the river, or rather

built upon the tributary of it called the Bremer, is the centre of a large tract of cotton plantations ; the railway runs into the heart of the farming districts, and it is intended to continue it between Toowoomba and Warwick, the latter place being the finest wheat-growing locality in Queensland. This line, when completed, will connect Brisbane and Ipswich with the richest portions of the Downs, and the valuable agricultural district of New England in New South Wales.

Coal is being worked on the Brisbane river, and numbers of small farms are dotted about in every direction, growing maize, barley, oats, potatoes, arrowroot, and other vegetables, besides bananas, pines, grapes, peaches, and many other European and tropical fruits.

The journey from Brisbane to Sydney in the south, or to Cleveland Bay in the north, or to any port lying between, is performed by steamer. The charge for a saloon ticket from Brisbane to Rockhampton, about 300 miles, is £6. This steamer leaves Brisbane twice a week, and calls at Maryborough and Gladstone ; that which leaves on Tuesday, reaches Rockhampton usually the following Saturday night. The boats are not made to suit the river, and are consequently frequently sticking on the shoals, sometimes remaining all night.

The channels, both across the flats in the rivers, and also through the bars which are invariably found at their entrances, are constantly shifting; great attention, however, is paid to the navigation, and accidents very rarely occur. The appearance of the coast between Brisbane and Keppel Bay, is uninteresting, with the exception of one or two bold headlands, Frazer and Woody Islands.

There is a rise on the bar of the Pioneer river, from  $10\frac{1}{2}$  feet to 16 feet, and at the settlement from 9 feet to 12 feet. Vessels may lie aground at low water abreast the settlement in safety, on soft sandy bottom, the river at that time of tide forming a perfectly sheltered basin there.

The scenery between Mackay and Port Denison is exceedingly grand, the steamer passing almost within stone's throw of high precipitous islands, very rocky and sometimes covered with pine trees.

Quantities of beautiful coral and oysters abound in these northern islands. The ports north of Cleveland Bay and those in the Gulf, may be reached by sailing vessels which now and then take "loading," &c., up there.



## CHAPTER V.

### ABORIGINALS.

THE "Black question" gives rise to more argument than almost any other; the subject being, which is the proper conduct to pursue towards the Blacks; and those who usually discuss this question being the settlers on the one side, and certain individuals styled "Black protectors" on the other, who live in the towns and never saw a "Miall" Black, but only the lazy vagabonds that sneak about the towns and settled stations.

Anyone who is *really* acquainted with the matter, and is competent to judge, from having been not only amongst station and town Blacks, but also for years in the same country with perfectly wild Blacks, will bear me out in saying that there is not a redeeming point in their whole character: this is a sweeping assertion, but it is a fact that there is no savage in the world so thoroughly low and degraded as the Queensland Black. It will perhaps be remarked, "Look how they have sometimes befriended unfortunate explorers and shipwrecked sailors." Yes, and look how they have killed them too, an exception merely proves the rule. When unfortunate

“whites” have been spared it has usually been done for the same reason that we should keep alive any curious looking wild animal: or because the “white men” taught them to use old iron from wrecks, or made and laid snares for game better than their black captors, who are extremely lazy. And because these Blacks can track well, hunt well, and are exceedingly acute in all their senses; some bring forward these qualities as a proof of their intelligence, as if the fact of finding their daily food is any sign: what Dingo or other wild animal does not do as much? A Black boy on a station can sometimes be made very useful, for besides getting wood and water, he will soon learn to ride, and ride well too: he is also very useful in tracking his sable brethren when they come to do mischief on the run. Here again there are exceptions, but as a rule these boys can not be depended upon—they are constantly running away. They are always called *Black boys*, no matter what their age is. The settlers find them loafing about the towns and settled districts and induce them to accompany them back to their stations, giving them clothes, rations, tobacco, &c., but they often “bolt” directly they receive any of their clothes, however well they may have been treated. On the other hand I have known some, but the cases have been rare, who have stayed for

years on a station and received regular wages all the time. Some of the station holders in the north allow the tribes of their district, to camp about the station, making use of them as shepherds, &c., while neighbouring stations do not allow them on their runs at all : this half and half sort of conduct has before now caused most unpleasant matters to arise, for the Blacks have committed robberies and even murders on a station where they are *not* "allowed in," and have then flown to the station where they *are*, and where they remain in safety until the affair has blown over.

As a district becomes thoroughly settled (10 or 12 years old) one finds Blacks about the stations, the very ones who years before had committed frightful depredations in the district, *now* engaged in washing sheep, or some equally peaceable avocation ; scarcely however to be depended upon, as the slightest fancy will cause them to quit suddenly. But it is in new country where the Blacks are really bad, and when they appear on these Northern runs, the murdering of shepherds or spearing of cattle, (according to whether it is a cattle or sheep station) is pretty sure to follow. One instance of the way they murdered two shepherds will suffice. These two men had charge of a flock of sheep far up in the North Kennedy district : they were driving them



home to the yard one evening, according to custom, and when close to their tent they were knocked down by "Nullah Nullahs," hurled by several Blacks who were hidden behind the trees, and then speared as they lay upon the ground: having completed their work so far, they next proceeded to a favourite diversion of theirs, that of cutting open the bodies of the murdered men and taking out the kidney fat, this they rub over their bodies, under the impression that it will save them from their enemies. Though these shepherds are presented with fire-arms, they seldom take any care of them, but carry them about loaded for weeks.

The following very truthful article I take from the "Port Denison Times" of May, 1868:

"The Black (aboriginal) question is daily assuming a more serious aspect in this part of Australia. Complaints are constantly coming in of the ruinous losses to which the owners of coast runs are subjected. The extent to which the stock has in some cases been reduced is almost incredible, we hear of one station where there should be 8000 head, but where at present they cannot muster half as many hundreds as they should have thousands. This no doubt is the extreme case, but there are plenty of others nearly as bad. The loss of shepherds, stockmen and travellers killed by black fellows is of such

frequent occurrence as scarcely to call for any comment. In the face of all this, and of representations made upon the subject over and over again, our Government, with their usual short-sighted and miscalled economy, are still reducing the Native Police force, which is the only protection that the out-settlers have from the Blacks, and which instead of being reduced ought to be trebled or quadrupled in strength. If this suicidal policy is persisted in, the inevitable result will be the adoption by the white settlers of a system of self-protection against the savages.

“It is scarcely necessary to say how much such a result is to be deprecated, not only on account of the Blacks, of whom for every one that is killed now, ten probably will suffer if the settlers take the matter into their own hands, but on account of the settlers themselves, over whom the demoralizing effects of such a system will exert an influence for evil that it will be difficult to counterbalance.

“And yet if these men are deprived of the legal and authorised protection which the Government of the country claiming their allegiance is bound to afford them they will certainly take steps to protect themselves, and who shall blame them for so doing? Certainly pseudo-philanthropists, who live at home at ease, secure from all perils of this nature, have no



right to do so. They may say that white men have no business on the land, and that it is unjust to punish the Aborigines for endeavouring to resist us in our efforts to dispossess them of their own. But that argument would apply with equal force to Brisbane as to 'Inkerman' or 'Jarvisfield,' (the first a station 65 miles from Bowen, the latter a little further on, on the opposite side of the Burdekin river,)—and were it ever so good we do not find our philanthropists repudiating the rent that arises from this unjust occupation, or the taxes that are paid by the occupiers in pursuit of their immoral avocations. If our philanthropists are sincere let them imitate the greatest philanthropists of whom we have any record, the Apostles of Christianity, let them go among the Blacks, not with the insulting overbearing demeanour universally and not unnaturally adopted in the intercourse of civilized man with savages, but, as Paul became all things to all men, so let them to save these savages, become as it were savages themselves, and live amongst them, so as to see things from the same point of view that they do, and understand the peculiar temptations by which they are assailed. In this way they may possibly succeed in doing some good, as the Wesleyan and other missionaries have done in the South Seas. If they have not the courage or the faith to do this let them be-



moan their own weakness, but let them not cry out against allowing their fellow subjects that protection which is in a great measure rendered necessary by that very want of faith. But apart from the question of absolute justice in a matter which involves, as we all know, issues of immense breadth, terminating only in the question whether we have any right in Australia at all; putting that on one side we have now to consider not what ought to be, but what is. Right or wrong we are in Australia, and we may take it for granted that we mean to stop here. That being the case, it is to strain at a gnat and to swallow a camel to pretend to hesitate on conscientious scruples about taking such measures as are necessary to secure our safety in doing so. Measures of a dangerous, perhaps doubtful character being necessary, it is a matter of obvious expediency, and of duty on the part of the Government to secure to themselves full control of the conduct of such measures.

“If the settlers are forced into the necessity of taking upon themselves the responsibility of repelling the aggressions of the Blacks, and of doing so in a clandestine and illegal manner, consequences the most deplorable are sure to ensue.”

The above gives a very good idea of the state of things at present. The Native Police referred to are

recruited in various parts of the older districts of Queensland and also in the other colonies. They are stationed, in numbers varying from six to twenty, in barracks which are situated in large districts, these districts they have to patrol every now and then under the command of an officer, and their chief business is to protect the settlers from the Blacks. They are a most effective force, and though it would not be desirable for obvious reasons to go far into the subject, yet I must make a few remarks about their wonderful powers of tracking; after seeing what they can do, anyone could quite credit the astonishing accounts of running a trail, attributed by Cooper to his Indians.

This power is never applied to a better purpose than when the Native Police are tracking the steps of a white man lost in the Bush; which they do with the sagacity of a bloodhound. One out of many instances of a man lost in the Bush will suffice, and, though the troopers were in this case too late to save life, yet it was from no fault of theirs, but because the friends of the lost man did not send for them at once; his horse had been found about six miles from the station, saddled and bridled but with a stirrup leather missing; the troopers were shown this spot, and one of them soon signified by a low whistle that he had found the tracks; this was about a hun-



dred yards from the spot where the horse had been found ; they ran these tracks through a narrow belt of scrub with some ease, but on emerging on the other side their faculties were strongly tested, for the ground was dry and stony for miles, and towards the latter part the lost man had wandered about a great deal. The tracks on ordinary occasions can be distinguished from horseback, in this case the trooper had to dismount to make them out, sometimes all that could be seen was a small piece of lichen displaced from a stone, or a twig broken, or a small stone turned over ; then again the faint outline of the impression of some part of the boot could be perceived, in fact these men read the ground as we should a book. After a very tedious piece of tracking, and as the evening was fast closing in, we found the trail led into a sandy creek, which was perfectly dry, and here it was obvious from the marks, that the man had been in a state of madness, partly no doubt brought on by his utter solitude, but chiefly from his not finding water, for it could plainly be seen, even by an inexperienced eye, where he had rolled in the sand in his agony ; he had then crawled out on the other side, described a semicircle, and come back to the creek about a mile lower down, where the worst fears of the party were realized, for there lay his body cold and stiff ; he had denuded himself of most of his clothing, which was found close by.



The Blacks are very quick at discovering game ; they are exceedingly fond of native honey, and can discern the small bees at a great height up in the trees ; they can ascend any tree rapidly by cutting a small step for each foot at long intervals up its trunk ; some of the very largest trees they ascend by means of a wild vine which they keep round it as a hold by.

Blacks in their wild state are a roving lot ; in fact, they *cannot* stay long in one place, for they soon kill all the game in it. The coast Blacks are an exception, for they can always obtain an abundant supply of fish, and therefore frequently have permanent camps on the sea shore, consisting of well-built "gunyahs," or huts of bark : they have also bark canoes. These coast Blacks are a finer looking lot of men than those inland, and of a fiercer disposition. The "gins" (females) have to do most of the hard work, and are badly used. It is amusing to watch them when they are first brought into the presence of white people. During an expedition into new country on an occasion of this sort, a common Wellington boot was dropped at a gin's feet, when she yelled and fled away, evidently thinking it was a dangerous animal. On another occasion a gin was led up to look at a horse ; she did not seem very much frightened of the *animal*, but was perfectly

paralyzed when his *lips* were drawn back, showing his enormous teeth; and when she saw a man get on the animal's back, she fairly fled, supposing man and horse to be one animal.

The weapons of the Blacks consist of spears of hard wood, some ornamented, others plain; the slender grass tree is also used for making them. Some of the northern Blacks use a "woomera;" this is a short stick with a hook at the end, which hook fits into a hollow at the butt of the spear; by this means the spear can be projected with tremendous force, the Black retaining the "woomera" in his hand.

"Nullah nullahs" are clubs of every size and shape, some of them rudely carved. The coast Blacks carry a vast wooden sword; and the "yelaman" is found amongst them everywhere; this is a shield, so thick and tough that it will stop a revolver ball. Boomerangs are of two sorts, those which fly straight and others which can be brought back to the place from whence they are thrown. A great deal has been written about them, so that I shall merely state that a Black has stood alongside me and thrown a boomerang so as to describe a complete circle round a clump of trees, returning to us, and striking violently a "pint pot" at my feet, performing the most graceful gyrations in the air during its flight,

sometimes almost touching the ground in its dip, and then appearing to gain fresh force as it rose again high into the air. Fancy standing at one corner of a large building, and throwing a boomerang to your right hand, so that it will describe a circle round the building, and, if you remain in the same position, strike you in the rear. A Black who is an adept at it will do this with ease, but it is not every black that *can* do it. A practised hand can tell directly he has the weapon in his grasp whether it will fly or not. Boomerangs are either painted or carved ; very few white men can use them. These are their principal weapons of defence, and are all made of tough, strong wood,

The Aborigines are a lazy lot, only turning out when they are hungry. They never attempt anything in the shape of cultivation, nor laying by for the morrow. They cut out 'possums from a tree, or sugar bag (wild honey) by means of a tomahawk of green stone ; the handle is formed of a vine, and fixed in its place with gum. It is astonishing what a quantity of work is got through in the day with these blunt tomahawks. They make nets, both for fishing and hunting, of a fine flax which grows in the country ; the inner bark of a tree is also used ; they place their hunting nets across the tracks used by the kangaroos, wallaby, &c., and then drive the



game in. Birds they catch chiefly by snares. They also get on the high banks of lagoons, and knock over the ducks as they rise with boomerangs and waddies (light sticks.) They will eat anything, kangaroos, rats, snakes, grubs, snails, wallabies, 'guanas, shrimps, shell-fish, sharks, alligators, &c., besides all sorts of roots and wild fruits; human flesh they sometimes eat, though it hardly forms part of their food: they eat young men killed in battle, or killed by accident, also young women and children; but they never eat their enemies; these they cut up into strips, dry them, and distribute the pieces amongst their tribe; by doing this, they think they have their enemies' strength added to their own. They have no antidote for snake bites, and numbers are taken down by alligators.

I once came across a camp where the Blacks had intended holding a "Boorah," which consists of all the surrounding tribes congregating to perform a mysterious ceremony, which has never been witnessed by a white man, with the exception, perhaps, of Morrill, whom I shall quote later. Each Black usually has a small fire for himself and his gin at a camp, but in this instance there was one very large pile of wood ready to be lighted, and heaped up in a cleared space, while the ground round about was strewn with no less than thirty-two bodies of the

kangaroo tribe, from "old men" down to kangaroo rats; also snakes, porcupines, turkeys, ducks, and roots of all sorts; eight large 'possum rugs were stretched upon the ground; these skins are about the size of rabbits, and are sewn together by means of a small bone of the kangaroo for a needle, and its sinews for thread. Weapons of all sorts were there in hundreds; kangaroo nets, some of them forty yards long, and in mesh and substance like a cricket net, were rolled up in bundles. "Dilly-bags" were hung up to the trees; these are bags made of a sort of grass, and used by the Blacks for carrying ornaments in, such as coloured earths, to paint themselves with, ochre, feathers, necklaces of glass beads, hair nets; also knives made of flint, small tomahawks, &c. The best dilly-bags are made by the Blacks of Rockingham Bay. We also found in this large camp tin dishes, bits of a blanket, and a novel carefully wrapped up in tea-tree bark, all telling a tale of murder and robbery. Dingos, both old ones and pups, were either coiled up asleep in the temporary gunyahs, or prowling about the camp. They always accompany the Blacks.

The Aborigines, both male and female, go about perfectly naked; they are usually skinny, with well developed chests, owing to their constantly climbing for their food; their hair is fine, not woolly like an



African nigger's, but often very curly in huge masses all over their head; sometimes they tie it up in a bunch at the top, at other times cut it close. Volumes could be written, descriptive of the Blacks, and their habits, with anecdotes relating to them, but I think it better to quote a few remarks from 'James Morrill,' who lived with them for seventeen years. He spent this period in the neighbourhood of Mount Elliott and about the country which is *now* Cleveland bay, and during the whole time did not see a white man. He fell into the hands of the Blacks by being wrecked on this part of the coast, and he escaped from them by civilisation advancing to, and reaching the tribe he lived with, at the end of seventeen years.

He says, "The Aborigines amongst whom I have been living, are a fine race of people as to strength, size, and general appearance, but like those of other parts of this colony, they are treacherous, jealous, and cunning. They are not black, they are more the colour of half-castes. When born they are nearly white, but when they are three days old, the gins squeeze their own milk on them, and rub charcoal into their skins to make them black and shine. They have sunken eyes, broad noses, which are made so by their parents in infancy, and broad mouths. The infants are allowed to suck at the



breast a long time, indeed until they can get their own food. The women have very few children, seldom exceeding four, and seldom more than one at a time. I know of about four cases of twins. I also remember that in one case where there was a boy and a girl born to a woman, the father killed the boy and saved the girl, to avoid the trouble of bringing them both up, for they are very lazy. The women go the next day after their confinement into the swamps to gather food, as if nothing had happened. The men have several wives, in some instances as many as eight or nine, and it is about their wives that all their wars, fights, and feuds occur; they steal them from each other, and frequently lend them or sell them for a time for a slight remuneration. They never stay long in a locality, as one place becomes exhausted of food they travel to another. In the wet and cold season they put up small gunyahs to live in. They live in tribes, each tribe speaking a different dialect, it can hardly be called a different language.

“They have no chiefs, the strongest is the best man. They have no written language whatever, and consequently very little tradition; it is very guttural in sound, and extremely limited in power of expression.

“The different animals are arranged according to

the size of their feet, hence the sheep have the same name as their Wallabies (cargoon). All kinds of sailing vessels have the same name as their canoes, because they float on the water (woolgoora). The heavenly bodies are named differently, the sun is (ingin), which they think is a body of fire; the moon (werboonburra), they say is a human being like themselves, and comes down on the earth, and they sometimes meet it in some of their fishing excursions; they say one tribe throws it up and it gradually rises and then comes down again, when another tribe catches it to save it from hurting itself; they accordingly think there is a new sun and moon every night. They think that falling stars indicate the direction of danger, and that comets are the ghosts or spirits of some of their tribe, who have been killed at a distance from them, working their way back again. They think all the heavenly bodies are under their control, and that when there is an eclipse some of their tribe hide the sun with a sheet of bark to frighten the rest; they are very uneasy during its continuance. They are also very frightened of thunder (teegoora) and lightning (timulba). They have no knowledge of how they came into existence; they think they live and die like dogs. They fancy that after death they jump up white fellows, and this idea has more than once saved a white man's life. They say their

forefathers witnessed a great flood, and nearly all were drowned, only those who got on a very high mountain were saved. They measure time by moons, and wet and dry seasons. They can only count up to five, for any number beyond they put up their fingers.

“They get fire by friction—by rubbing two soft pieces of wood together of the same kind;—they generally use the wood of the black fig as being the easiest: they take a branch off a little thicker than your finger, split it up, and put it on the ground, the flat side upwards and hold it down with their feet; they then take a sound piece round and straight, about twelve inches long, and put one end on the flat side of the piece on the ground, holding it up between their hands, and then commence rolling it rapidly between them, pressing it in to the piece beneath, so that it begins to make a hole in it, as though they were boring it; after they have done that for a minute or two they make a notch on the side of the piece at the bottom, so that the fine dust they make while the boring process is going on shall fall on some dry grass they have there to catch it, they then commence the rolling process till sparks come, at last they pick up the dry grass with the dust in it, and blow till it lights up.

“The ceremony of making the lads young men



takes place about once every six years ; for eight or nine months immediately previous they have to go into the Bush to provide for themselves, during which time they are never allowed to see a female, this is to test their fitness to take a wife,—if they do see a female they think they will waste away. After the nine months are over they are brought into the camp, cane rings are put on their arms and tightened very much, so as to stop the circulation of the blood, their arms swell very much which puts them in great agony, they are then left in that torture all night, their cries are terrible to hear ; to keep their fingers from contracting and thus deforming them, they sit with their hands and fingers spread out on the ground, with the heels of their feet tightly pressed on them. In the morning they are brought out in the presence of their mothers, sisters, and relatives, and just above and below the mark of the cane ring on their arms they make small incisions to let the blood flow and prevent inflammation. While this is being done their mothers and relatives are crying and cutting themselves from head to foot with sharp stones in token of joy at seeing them. When this has somewhat subsided, places are made for them to sleep under, with boughs to shade them from the sun, as they could get no sleep, of course, during the night. While they are sleeping the old gins go

into the swamps and get roots to make cakes for them by the time they get up in the evening ; while the men get all the young men's spears they have been carrying with them, during the nine months they have been away, and fix them in the earth on a clear space, in a semicircle, fastening grass festoons from head to head of the spears. In the evening, all being ready, they wake up, generally about eighty in number at a time, and they are each seated under a festoon in a reclining position : then their sisters or female cousins lie with their heads on their swollen arms, to press down the inflamed and cut places, and they believe nothing harmful will come of it after that. While they are lying there a lot of cakes are thrown up and scrambled for by the lookers on, who had gone through the ceremony before them ; they then go to their several fires. In the morning they are taken a little way into the Bush again, and dressed up with shells, and the down of birds stuck on their heads, painted, and made to look to the best advantage ; they are then brought back to choose and take their sweethearts, and the whole ceremony closes with a grand corroboree, which consists of dancing and singing in a wild and monotonous tone, beating time with sticks. After this is over there is a good deal of quarrelling and fighting among them ; they steal the wives of the old and

weak men, and daughters from their parents, which leads to fighting, and often extends between two tribes, and then there is a war, which is not however of a very sanguinary nature; they often get some terrible blows, and sometimes one gets killed, but they cannot keep it up for many hours, for they are forced to get supplies in the shape of food in the swamps, and they seldom renew the conflict. They burn their dead, and carry the burnt remains about in a sheet of bark, tied up, for about twelve months, and when tired of it they throw it into a water-hole."

Morrill certainly existed amongst the Blacks, but his existence was a misery in itself, so much so that he never liked to refer to the subject; he suffered severely from rheumatism during his life with them, and this disease carried him off only a few months after his return to civilization.

The Aborigines mark their arms and bodies in a peculiar way, by cutting themselves, and then causing the wounds to heal with the lips open.

Whenever Blacks have been protected they have acted with the greater impunity. To take one instance out of many of recent date,—a party of about a hundred and fifty Blacks made an attack upon a station where they had been kindly treated, this was during the day time, they ransacked the store, and



pillaged everything they could lay hands on; there were but few white men at hand, and they were quite powerless to make a resistance with any chance of success. After taking all they required they went off to another station about ten miles distant, and there killed a lot of sheep, and ill-treated the shepherd, who attempted to defend his master's property: they took his gun from him, knocked him down, and left him on the ground in a state of insensibility: the alarm was given; the sub-inspector, with a body of native troopers, being informed of the raid, were quickly upon the track of the thieves. After twenty-four hours' hard riding they surprised them in their camp in a scrub on one of the rivers, where they were enjoying the good things they had stolen. A scrimmage took place, which resulted in the rascals being (in official language) quietly dispersed.

The Blacks in the town are not only nuisances, but are becoming dangerous. To show the way in which they sometimes treat their gins, I will relate an occurrence which took place in Rockhampton, as one sample out of many. A blackfellow and his gin were walking along one of the streets 'yabbering' in a most frightful manner; the former was thoroughly drunk, and had a bottle of grog in his hand, which his gin tried to take from him, as he was continually testing the quality of the liquor,

and every moment becoming more intoxicated : upon one of these occasions the savage turned on her, and knocked her down with his nullah nullah ; while she was down he jumped with all his force on her stomach, and thrust his spear deep into her side. As a matter of course, the yells that accompanied these brutal outrages were fearful : however, the poor woman managed to rise and get away from the infuriated beast, but not until he had been threatened with the contents of a double-barrelled gun which was presented at him. It is directly against the law to supply the Blacks with drink, but they always manage to get it somehow : however, the " Mialls " treat their gins in the same manner whenever the fit takes them. The Aborigines are fast disappearing before the advance of the white man : nothing causing them to do so quicker than spirits, which they will do anything to get, and which acts on them like poison.

The town and station Blacks as a rule understand English perfectly well, yet usually an absurd jargon is made use of in conversing with them ; thus, to take an instance of engaging a blackfellow in Brisbane for a trip to the Bay, the following intellectual conversation will probably take place :—

In the first place the expression " Warrah " sharply pronounced will gain any Black's attention : he will

answer "Ugh," when you follow it up, with "You and me go messmate along a big fellow water, like it bay?"

*Blackfellow*.—"What name? look out duck?" upon which, being intent upon sport, you respond emphatically, "Yo, I."

*Blackfellow*.—"Supposing mine go, what you give it mine?"

*Answer*.—"You budgery fellow, I believe?" (Black—"Yo, I.") "Mine give um you cabonne patter, cabonne baccy."

Black whispers "*grog?*" The answer he receives satisfies all his doubts, and but one question remains, "When you and me come back like it *Birabane?*"

You tell him; an apparently sulky "me go" settles the bargain; but before quitting, he is no true Black if he does not finish up with "Give me sixpence." When he departs in great glee until he is wanted, informing all other Blacks within shouting distance of his luck. And he will be found most useful and amusing during the trip, knowing all the shoals and channels in the bay, and the haunts of game.

On one occasion we secured the services of one who astonished us by the cool way in which he chaffed both white people and black as we passed down the river, until he hailed a gentleman, who was



riding by with a lady, with "That budgery Mary ; that white Mary belonging to you?" This being a mild request to know if she was his wife ; upon which we forbade any more of his remarks to passers' by, and he relapsed into a moody silence till some few miles from the bay he gave vent to the accustom'd "Ugh," and on being asked "What name?" replied "Duck." "Big fellow mob?" was asked him. "Baal, narangi," which meant only a few.

Watch two blackfellows saying good bye to each other ; they will turn round every few yards and shout at each other until a tremendous space of country separates the two, and will still shout till they are out of sight of each other.

The only instance that I knew of Blacks communicating by symbols, was that of a blackfellow, who gave me a notched stick to be conveyed to his tribe as I was going that way, and which proved to be thoroughly understood by the tribe in question.

Some few of the Blacks can read and write, but I can only speak from experience of one such case.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EARTH—BEASTS, SNAKES, ETC.

THE animals that one usually meets with in the Bush are few in number, unless they are specially hunted for; there are numerous sorts of rats, and so on, but without describing all these, a few words may be added concerning the habits of some of the larger animals.

As Kangaroos are so well known by repute at home, it may be as well to commence with them.

The real Kangaroo is very common in the south of Queensland: in fact, wherever the aboriginal disappears the game increases. I have not found Kangaroos so common in the northern districts, about the tropics, but then the Wallaby is very common there; this animal differs from the Kangaroo in its habits; it is also smaller, but precisely the same shape; it lies in the coarse, long grass like a hare; is easily found with a dog, and usually knocked over with buck shot.

The Kangaroo generally moves about in the daytime, feeding; two or three together where they are scarce; they go down on all fours to feed, and now and then sit up to look about them, then give a great

clumsy jump, and resume their feeding. Though the very biggest 'old man' may be easily knocked over with a charge of buck shot, yet it greatly adds to the sport to stalk them with a rifle: frequently, on shooting a female, I have found a young one, or Joey, as large as a rabbit, in her pouch; these little ones can be easily tamed. I once broke the thigh of a large male, and on approaching him he made a curious noise like a roar, and tried to get at me; but they are most harmless, and even timid animals, though in defending themselves from dogs they frequently both wound and kill them. Two Kangaroo hounds (they sometimes resemble coarse deer hounds) one day 'bailed up' a Kangaroo in a water-hole; the smallest of the two dogs went in at him in spite of all our efforts to prevent him; the larger dog was too exhausted. The 'old man' simply seized the dog in his arms, and deliberately drowned him. When we had a chance to shoot with safety we fired, killing the Kangaroo, but too late to save the life of our game dog. The tail of this Kangaroo at the base was as large as the circumference of a cheese plate. Were it necessary, I could give numerous instances of their killing dogs; they generally seize him with their sharp fore-claws, hold him to their breast, and rip him *down* with their hind feet, which are very powerful and are armed with



strong sharp-pointed claws. Old dogs know better than to let a Kangaroo tackle them. An 'old man' can be easily run down; they hop along with heavy bounds, which can be heard a long way off; the lighter and younger ones, called 'flyers,' are the fellows to test the dogs; they go with tremendous speed, covering a broad space of ground at each leap. It used at first to amaze me to see the way the horsemen followed the chase, bolting through the heavy timber in apparently the most reckless style; but I soon discovered that however well you may steer him, yet a good bush horse by his own cleverness is the secret of your getting well through; for an old hand at the game is always prepared for standing timber and half hidden logs. If the Kangaroo gets into a scrub, unless he is nearly done, both horsemen and dogs had better leave him alone.

The marsupials are represented in every size from a large Kangaroo to a mouse; it is curious to see one of these mice, hunted by terriers in a scrub, take to a tree with a couple of its young ones hanging on to it. Kangaroo rats are not generally common; they afford great sport to the gun, being somewhat larger than a rabbit, and taking after him to a certain extent in their habit of lying in short "tussocky" grass; they can dodge a dog splendidly. All the marsupials carrying a young one of any size

in their pouch will throw it out on being closely pressed by the dogs. They feed on grass, but I have seen wallaby in a field of Indian corn reaching up with their fore feet, and stripping the cob down with their teeth. The Paddy melon is another of the species, and exceedingly destructive to the crops.

*Opossums*.—As the country becomes taken up and the Blacks disappear, all bush game increases at a very great rate; this particularly applies to Opossums; they live in holes in the trees by day, and feed in the night. It requires a knowledge of their habits to find them in their holes, but they may be easily shot on moonlight nights; they make a sort of growling noise like a night hawk; and when they are fighting other noises. A good joke is told of a new arrival in the colony, who wrote home and told his friends that the Blacks were exceedingly sagacious; for that he saw a black woman (gin) apply her nose to a gum tree, and, detecting the scent of a 'possum which had ascended the night before, she went up the tree and cut him out. The Blacks certainly are very fine in their senses, but they cannot quite do this. The gin saw the marks of the animal's claws on the tree, and was looking close to see if they were fresh ones. To an *unpractised* eye they look fresh when they are a week old. Opossum



skins are worth collecting in the winter time, when they are thickest in fur. There is another sort called the ring-tailed opossum, but both sorts can hang by their tails anywhere.

*Dingos*, or wild dogs, are common everywhere; sometimes they sneak about in the daytime, but generally are then hidden away in thick covers, and hunt at night in packs, when they howl in the most fearfully dismal manner. They are found of various colours—red, fawn colour, black: the red, however, predominating; the old dogs are of great size and weight, with strong gaunt limbs; they will kill anything that they dare tackle, and at night will come right up to the house, carry off fowls, and kill any small domesticated dog they may find about; it is very hard to get a shot at them on these occasions. I was once out on a run with two companions when we heard a cow bellowing very loud; on galloping up we found her trying to protect her calf, which was only two or three days old, from the assaults of eight dingoes; as soon as she had chased one away, the rest would be snapping at the calf, and it would soon have been killed; but two of us singled out a dark dog, and the third another; after a short gallop, we were alongside of one, and then the fun began, he dodging behind the horses' legs, while we were attempting to knock him over with the stirrup iron,



(on coming alongside either dingo or emu, the stirrup-iron will be found a most effective weapon :) two of us were too much for him : a lucky blow stopped him, when, after battering his head a bit more, we cut his throat ; *invariably* do this, for they are more retentive of life than any other animal, and no hammering will kill them. I have known them battered into a jelly, so to speak, worried by dogs, left for dead ; and yet crawl away. Our companion was not so lucky with his animal, it having got into a large log ; however, we plugged up the only outlet to the log, and, setting it on fire, left him to his fate. Some of these logs can be turned into a sort of trap ; set with a piece of beef in it, and great fun can be had with a trapped dingo. Some kangaroo dogs will kill them well ; others will run up to them, and then leave them. The usual method on stations is poisoning them ; it is a dangerous method, as many a valuable domestic dog has been killed by this means ; but it must be done, for dingoes are so destructive, to sheep in particular. When poisoning is done on a small scale, it is best effected in the following manner :—first take care to fasten up all your dogs, then walk round the place the dingoes frequent, dragging a piece of liver behind you, and place the baits at long intervals on the trail of the liver : (the bait is a piece of *hard* suet ; a slit made in it, and

as much strychnine put in as will go on the point of a pen-knife :) mark carefully where the baits are, and then go the first thing in the morning, and take up any that are left. I have often found the dingo within a few yards of where the bait was. Another way is to hang a piece of meat high up above the bait, when, after eating the bait, he will jump for the meat till he dies. It is safer to cover the bait slightly, as then there is no fear of crows removing it. The dingo has a very keen scent, and may sometimes be seen hunting something slowly in short grass on plains; *sometimes* their skins are very fine, and *always* very strong; shoe laces made of them hardly ever wear out; they are sometimes tamed, but always have a sneaking, hang-dog look about them, never looking you in the face, and are very treacherous; they do not hold on in fighting, but snap.

*The Native Bear.*—I never found the native bear far north: it is common enough about the Brisbane scrubs. Tree-sloth would, I think, be a more appropriate name: it is bigger and stouter than the 'possum, feeds on leaves, lives in trees, and is perfectly harmless, and exceedingly stupid-looking. Then there are native cats, porcupines, and flying squirrels. This latter is a beautiful little creature, with the softest fur imaginable. The female carries



her young in a pouch; a thin membrane covered with fur enables them to fly from branch to branch; they come out at twilight. The porcupine has good quills about five or six inches long. Native cats are ferocious little brutes, something like a big pole cat: they live in holes, and are great pests where fowls are kept.

Bush game is poor eating when cooked on a camp fire; some will deny this: but I say it from experience of many a trial, and I think I have tried everything during my wanderings in the Bush, camping with Blacks, etc. Kangaroos, of various sorts, 'possums, 'guanas, bandicoot, porcupine, snake, fresh-water turtle, etc. Birds and fish are *good* in whatever way they are cooked; but may be insipid. Snake (it was a carpet snake) put me in mind of an insipid white fish requiring salt: it was roasted in its natural coil, on the embers. Guana's eggs, taken from the animal, are decidedly good; but I affirm that a piece of salt beef, not too old, is more palatable than any of the above, unless they are cooked by a really good cook, with every appliance handy, sauces, etc. And then, I have eaten wallaby, which was mistaken for preserved jugged hare, and was really delicious; and kangaroo-tail soup "is not to be beaten." Certainly the animal I liked best cooked on a bush fire was a bandicoot.



It is rather like a little pig in appearance, but hairy, and subsists on roots. The same animal cooked at home reminded me of boiled rabbit.

*Snakes and Iguanas.*—The *Iguana*, or, as it is always called in Queensland, *guana*, is found in forest land, scrubs, sides of creeks, everywhere, and in your hen roosts too, stealing young chickens and eggs. I have shot them four feet long; they are shaped like a lizard, with a handsome strong skin, which makes excellent pouches. They will run and dodge pretty well for a bit, and can generally escape a dog in the long grass for some time, and eventually take refuge in a hollow log, where they may be burnt out or cut out, or they will ascend a tree, from which elevated position they afford excellent practice for a revolver, as soon as you can see the body of one, for he invariably keeps on the opposite side of the tree to you as you walk round, forgetting, however, that the yellow end of his long tail betrays him. He will often “plant” if you come on him suddenly, *i.e.* remain as still as death, as long as he thinks you do not see him. When pursued by dogs they make a curious rattling noise. They eat anything. One, that I brought down from the top of a tree, brought up an eel. But beware how you eat any *guana* that you have killed near a cattle camp, or in the neighbourhood of a dead beast: the

probability is that the animals have died of pleura, and guanas love to get inside the carcase and gorge. Their claws are very sharp, and they can bite very hard.

Snakes abound of every size and colour: there is one little fellow which does not grow longer than four or five inches, and is not much thicker than a knitting-needle, he has black marks on his head. Other sorts are sometimes killed fourteen feet long and upwards. It is astonishing how seldom one hears of any one in Queensland dying from the effects of a snake bite, and I am sure the number of poisonous snakes is greatly exaggerated. On showing the body of a snake that you have killed, unless it is a carpet snake which every one knows, you will be sure to hear some one say, that it is one of the most deadly ones, simply because it *looks* poisonous, for scarcely anything is really known about these Queensland snakes as yet. I do not venture to describe the death adder, simply because I am not satisfied myself as to which it is, for three different snakes I have killed have been sworn to as being death adders; while two old bushmen agreed about a fourth snake, which was killed long afterwards in a man's blanket, being a death adder, but got into a hot argument as to whether he had a sting in his tail: we could find none, but the man backing the sting called



loudly for a microscope, however, as there was no such thing within about 200 miles, the *point* remained unsettled. I have often heard this matter discussed since. I had a bull terrier who for years was in the habit of killing snakes. I have seen him bitten two or three times, the snakes drawing blood with no ill effects, and one of these snakes was a black one, supposed to be deadly. A thin snake going along a beaten track used to puzzle him, for there was not enough body to pick it up by ; but he would never leave it, and on its taking to the grass, he would seize it about the middle and shake it so violently that sometimes the two ends would quite hurt the sides of his head from striking against them. The carpet snake is very slow in its progress, perfectly harmless, living on rats, 'possums, etc., and is often found in trees ; he has two little horny legs, hardly discernible, on the belly near the vent, these are evidently to assist him in climbing ; his skin is handsomely marked.

The terrier above-mentioned, in company with two Scotch terriers, found a carpet snake, about eight feet long, in a field one day ; a snake this size would have teeth as large as those of a cat. The dogs could not make out his head, and so commenced shaking different parts of his body, when the snake seized one of the Scotch terriers by the throat ; the dog



yelled with fright, for he was new at the game, and this seizure was quite unexpected to him; but the snake would not let go, in fact *could not* from the fact of the teeth curving in; so the two dogs were shaking the snake and dragging it about, while the snake was dragging the third dog about. As soon as we could leave off laughing we put an end to this curious warfare.

All the other smaller snakes live on the tree-frog, a pretty little light-green fellow, whose favourite place of abode is in a banana-tree where the leaf joins the trunk; directly he is attacked by the snake he cries out in a shrill tone, and many a snake is destroyed by his means. Some people keep this tree-frog in their water jugs, for he destroys quantities of mosquitos and beetles.

There is a black snake with a yellow belly that grows to a great size; and on being cut off from his hole, he will sometimes chase you; he is very quick. Small black ones are quicker than any; if you see one enter an isolated bunch of grass, be sure and look *at once* on the opposite side of it, and probably you will see him half a dozen yards off. They do not care about making the first attack. I was once bathing in a creek, and walking under some low bushes, I felt something touch my naked shoulder; this I knew was a snake by the touch, so

did not look up, but a few steps further I looked back and saw a large snake in the bush, one of the "loops" of whose body had touched me. Another time I was going under a paddock fence at night, and was placing my hands on the rail, when they came in contact with a snake which felt very cold, but he did not attempt to bite me. On another occasion I was so intent upon some ducks, that had it not been for a native trooper pulling me quickly back, I should have put my bare foot on a whip snake coiled up, and then must have been bitten; this was a poisonous one, and the trooper knew it to be so. I should recommend everyone to take with them, wherever they go in Queensland, the best antidote that is at present known; I have never been without it anywhere, and consider the matter of sufficient consequence to warrant my giving it to my readers in Mr. Buckland's own words. "Any preparation of ammonia, especially 'eau de luce' is valuable; when bitten the first doses should be given as strong as the patient can bear them; the wound should also be thoroughly saturated with ammonia." And be sure that a glass stopper is put into the bottle, for unless you see to this, a cork is used, which before very long is completely destroyed by the strength of the "eau de luce." A friend of mine was bitten by a black snake with a yellow

belly ; he was bitten in the arm whilst bathing at the edge of a lagoon ; luckily the house was near, and he ran up, holding the towel tight round the arm above the wound, for he felt that he was poisoned ; he gashed the wound, which could hardly be seen, with a knife, and rubbed a piece of caustic in it, and partook freely of brandy. These prompt and strong measures undoubtedly saved his life ; but he passed a dreadful night of pain, and felt the effects of the wound for some time afterwards.

There are several sorts of water lizards and land lizards in Queensland, but they are harmless ; one of the latter is an ugly animal, with a frill round his neck, which he can raise or lower at pleasure. When in danger he raises it, and opens his mouth which is black inside, and in this state presents an appearance sufficiently disagreeable to cause the best dog to hesitate.



## CHAPTER VII.

## AIR—BIRDS, INSECTS.

BIRDS.—There are more beautiful birds in Queensland than a casual observer would give the country credit for; but, to ensure a good collection you must be in and about the scrubs every day, also on the forest land; and you require a quick eye, and in some cases great patience.

The first day's real shooting that I ever had in Queensland was on "Stone Island," situate in the Bay of Port Denison. Pigs were once turned out on this island, and have now increased greatly. I shot a large sort of quail here, and a smaller one which was very dark, and handsomely marked: also a scrub turkey (*Talegalla*), a fine eating bird, with a bald neck and head: the neck yellow and the head red; plumage dark brown; these birds run in the scrubs at a great pace. A terrier is very useful to put them up, and if you do not get one flying, you will be sure to get one sitting, for it will soon settle in a tree, when the dog will stay underneath and bark, if well trained. There is also a scrub

fowl. I shot a peculiar kind of bird, black and white, with a long red bill, called a "red bill," for want of a better name; also curlews, etc.

The common parrot of Queensland is the "Blue Mountain," a small gaudy-coloured bird; they go in flocks generally, and when flying swiftly overhead resemble miniature pickaxes in shape. This parrot has a blue head, green back, scarlet under the wings, yellow and red belly, light green ring half round the neck at the back part, red beak and red eye. He can be tamed, but is difficult to keep long, for his natural food is the honey from the tea-tree, which he is always sucking with his tongue.

The Rosella Parrots are larger, and usually go in couples. It is a rare bird, very handsome, with a yellow head, and a great deal of blue about the back; it will be found in the forest land, as also the smaller species of green parrots; sometimes during the heat of the day, they are quiet in the trees, and it requires a sharp eye to detect them. The "crimson wing" is a beautiful gaudy parrot. A large sort of Wood Ibis, black and white, frequents the open forest, stalking about amongst the trees. A beautiful species of flycatcher will be found about water-holes; he has a great deal of green and blue about him, and two of his tail feathers are much longer than the rest: he leaves at one part of the year, but I

recollect seeing him from May to July, during the winter months. Then there is the Laughing Jack-ass, or Gigantic Kingfisher, a most comical bird, and only a couple should ever be shot by a sportsman, and those for preserving as specimens, for they are most useful in killing snakes. They seem to be generally convulsed with laughter when an unlucky traveller meets with any accident, when drays get stuck, or when one is vainly looking for water; but the Jackass is not *quite* so regular in his "tuning up" at sunrise and sunset as is supposed, though he generally commences laughing in the early morning, he does not laugh for nothing. But he will often excite the smiles of a passer by with the faces he makes in trying to bolt a good sized snake alive, while he is perched on the limb of a tree; another Jackass will sometimes seize the other end of the snake, and both will gravely pull till one conquers, when the other will retreat and burst into a furious laugh, while the fishy-looking little eye of the conqueror will twinkle with triumph. The Jackasses are easily tamed. The feathers about the tail are of a handsome blue, the head large, the eye cold and grey. The Bell-bird imitates a bell to perfection; I have known an old hand in the bush taken in by him. Another whistles and makes a noise very like the crack of a whip.



The "More Pork" is a night bird, with a melancholy note something like a "Cuckoo" or More Pork, badly pronounced. I have shot him at the side of a creek in the day time; his plumage is yellow, he flies like an owl, but more resembles a heron in shape.

There is a large White Cockatoo and a smaller one. Both are very plentiful wherever there is much water. They are too common to particularize.

The Black Cockatoo is rather a rare bird and exceedingly shy; his note, unlike his white brother's screech, is very plaintive; his body, including the top-knot is entirely black, with the exception of the tail feathers, which in the case of the male bird are of a brilliant red, perfectly dazzling when spread out, and in that of the female barred with yellow and red, with little white spots. These birds live principally on a berry growing on the bloodwood tree, and build their nests in the hole of a tree, in the same manner as the White Cockatoo. I never succeeded in finding more than one nest, and that contained two young ones. Besides these, there are Leather Heads, Blood Birds, Copper Backs, and hundreds of others, whose names, none but a naturalist would know.

I have often shot birds in the North Kennedy

district, and preserved them, and no one could tell me their names; in fact, few had ever seen them before.

A careless observer will go into numerous scrubs and scarcely remark a bird, while a keen sportsman, by stepping quietly about, and knocking over every moving thing in the trees, will bring some rare specimens to light. But he must not fancy that the report of his gun will frighten them much amongst timber, for the falling of trees and heavy branches accustom them to loud sounds. I have been very successful when sitting within shot of a scrub fig-tree, on which the fruit was ripe; but this method applies more particularly to the pigeon tribe. I never saw any country with such a variety of pigeons as Queensland; they are of every size and literally every colour. I will enumerate a few of the kinds that I have shot. First, there is one that I have christened the "Pheasant pigeon," a brown bird, with a long brown tail: it is tame, feeds largely on the wild Cape gooseberry, is delicately made and small in size. Then there is the "Crested pigeon," so called from his having a crest of feathers an inch in height on his head. He is a very large and strong made bird, with a red bill and red eye. This species goes in flocks, and feeds in the scrubs. There is another Flock pigeon found on plains, with a broad breast, grey and white; and



also a much smaller solitary sort, with green backs and purple breasts: they feed on figs. Another little fellow, that it is hard to get a shot at, is yellow, green, and red, with a crimson head. Several kinds of pigeons feed on the berries of the tall palm and quandang trees which grow along the banks of the Pioneer River, Mackay. Thus, one may find a large one with green back and purple and yellow breast, called the Whompoa, or painted pigeon. Another, of a dark slate colour, with white breast, red bill and red feet; but one of the handsomest that I know of is the Torres Straits pigeon. I believe they are to be found in countless numbers near the Straits, and they come in pretty large flocks to the Pioneer River. It is great fun shooting them. Some of the scrubs are composed almost entirely of quandang and palm trees; the former stand very high, the stems growing for 50 or 60 feet without any branches; its fruit, which when ripe falls off the tree, is blue, and the stone is used, both in Queensland and at home, for making necklaces, bracelets, etc. Such a scrub as this is easy to walk about in, there being little or no undergrowth; therefore, you should choose your time when the quandangs are ripe; and having taken your stand under a large tree, you will soon find a stone fall close to you, and, with careful



watching, see the pigeons appearing in the highest branches, where they seem almost totally white.

This class of pigeons, in common with several others, actually swallow the fruit of the quandang whole, and evacuate the stone. The Torres Straits' pigeon is of a very dark slate colour and white; the roots of its feathers incline to orange, and give it a very rich appearance. It is a plump bird, and falls with a good thud. It coos gently, both in the morning and evening.

The Bronzewing pigeon is a handsome bird, coloured like a sort of shot silk. I have found it chiefly on forest land. The Squatter pigeon will squat on the ground like a partridge, and is often knocked over with a stockwhip. I once shot two of them with a revolver out of a small mob squatting on the track.

Every sort of pigeon that I have shot has proved excellent eating. Small buff-coloured doves are also found in great variety, and are easily tamed.

Emu hunting is great fun, either with or without dogs. The gallop on large plains is most exciting; but the skin of the bird is usually injured in this way. The best skin I ever got was by shooting the emu; there were two of them on a plain, when I rode up on one side of them, so as to come within shot; I imitated their whistle, and exposed a white

handkerchief, for they possess a good deal of curiosity; I then dismounted, and fired at the ribs of one of them, when he ran for a few yards, and dropped dead. The piece I used was a smooth-bored carbine, carrying a large ball. The other bird was so bewildered that he remained within shot for about ten minutes, but I would not touch him, as I had enough to do to skin the dead one, and bring away a good lump of fat from the rump to melt.

Emu oil is said to possess wonderful properties; its flesh is not bad, but that is all I can say for it. There is a bird on the plains known as the "plain turkey;" I think it is a species of bustard; it grows to a great weight, and is very good eating; it may be easily approached on horseback: its plumage is grey; but this bird is very clumsy at rising off the ground. A friend of mine often rides as if he were going past it, and then, putting spurs to his horse, he gallops straight at it, and generally succeeds in knocking it over, as it rises, a few yards before his horse's nose, holding the gun out in one hand when shooting.

Snipe are very scattered, and though you may have good sport one season in a certain marsh, it does not in the least follow that you will have the same the next season. I saw them in great numbers on Curtis Island outside Rockhampton in the month of May.

There are numerous varieties of beautiful finches, which can be tamed. One sort, the cock of which is entirely red, I have had breeding in confinement. I have shot a small black-looking bird with a large crest on his head ; also a black bird with a very long tail and a blood-red eye : this bird has a loud, sharp note ; he is very shy and frequents the scrubs.

There are many other kinds, such as bitterns, herons, gigantic cranes, pelicans, and native companions. These last are tall grey birds, with red heads : their flesh is good to eat. When not disturbed they make the most absurd antics, pirouetting and dancing about, and round each other in the most conceited way. They are often kept tame about the stations. But pets, as a rule, are objectionable in the bush : for if they are neither dirty nor mischievous, some accident is sure to befall them, as in the case of a young kangaroo, for instance, who, as soon as he had become clean, docile and tame, was killed by a stray kangaroo dog.

The lotus bird is a pretty little creature ; it runs along the leaves of the water-lily.

There are also curious specimens amongst the owls, goat-suckers, or night hawks. These latter birds have mouths sufficiently large to swallow the English night hawks whole. There are, also, many kinds of bats. The flying-fox is a strange animal :



great numbers of them sometimes darken the sky. It is a pretty sight to see them drinking in a river towards sunset; they dip up and down so gracefully. In the daytime they remain in the mangroves and thick scrubs, hanging motionless to the trees by their hooks; they feed at night, on the berries of the forest trees, or the fruit of any garden tree, which they will completely strip; when fighting at night, they make a noise like a legion of rats. The ordinary flying-fox measures over three feet from tip to tip of its wings; its colour is dull brown, and it has the head of a rat and the teeth of a cat. In preserving them, the wings should be varnished over with a little copal varnish, or the membrane they are composed of will not keep. This creature emits a sickening smell, and is eaten with great gusto by the Blacks and South Sea Islanders.

I will not detain my readers longer on the subject of the feathered tribe, as, were I to describe even a tenth part of the birds I know of, it would fill a volume. But before leaving this interesting topic I will give a short account of the Ducks; as they exceed the pigeons in number and variety. I will only mention the ordinary kinds. The black duck is, *par excellence*, the best bird of the species, he is one of the largest, and certainly the commonest, being found over the whole of Queensland. The

Burdekin duck is also large, and bronze and white in colour. They are found in large numbers on the River Burdekin, from which they derive their name. The wood duck, which is black and white, is much easier to approach than the black duck. The whistling duck is a small bird, with long hackles on his neck, like the plumage of a woodcock. Then there is the small black and white teal, the common teal, the green-backed teal, the widgeon, the shoveller, and various others. The Burdekin and wood duck perch on trees. Geese are scarcer; they are black and white birds, their bills and feet are red; the latter without any web. They are not much larger than our brent geese. The black swan is a *rara avis* in Queensland; I have only seen them in two or three places. I once saw about eight in Lake Salvator, about 250 miles south, and a little west of Rockhampton. Of course, I do not mention those kept on ornamental water in some of the older runs in the southern part of the colony. Soap and corrosive sublimate can be purchased in any of the towns. The preserving fluid should be painted over the beaks and feet of the birds, which should then be placed in a cedar box, and be looked at now and then. By these means I have succeeded in keeping birds perfect and free from insects, for years before sending them home. The only real trouble I ever



experienced with skins was in getting rid of the fat on that of the emu, but this was doubtless occasioned by the hurried way in which I had to accomplish it, being far from home at the time. The cassowary is found in the scrubs about Rockingham Bay. The magpie-lark is about the size of a thrush, black and white in colour, and whistles beautifully. The "shepherd's companion" is a species of water-wagtail, exceedingly tame, and frequenting the most desolate parts of the bush. Many of the birds sing and whistle in the early morning. The nests are hard to find, and *apparently* very scarce. That of scrub turkey is an exception, the nest being a mound of earth several yards in circumference, and many turkeys lay in the same nest; the eggs are hatched by the heat of the soil.

*Insects.*—There are few countries so full of insect-life as Queensland. I will confine my remarks to some of the principal kinds, as their name is legion. Mosquitoes rank first as "the plague of one's life." There are several species, the worst being a small black mosquito that frequents the scrubs as a rule, but is found everywhere after rain. There is a grey, or rather piebald one which is the size of a fly, and buzzes like a bluebottle, but his bite is not so venomous as that of the small black one, and he heralds his approach more plainly. Insects abound



about new country till the grass is eaten down round the station, and are always prevalent where there are swamps, lagoons, or scrubs, but they disappear from a plantation as soon as the land is cultivated. I have known stations in tropical Queensland where there never are mosquitoes, and where mosquito nets are things unheard of; and again stations, situated in every respect like those above-mentioned, and within fifty miles of them, swarming with mosquitoes.

New chums always get marked by them at first, and their skin, for some weeks, presents the appearance of a plum pudding till they get seasoned, when the bite scarcely shows, though the irritation always follows to a certain extent. There are several preventives, such as oiling the face, etc., but I consider the "remedy worse than the evil;" in fact I have never been much troubled by mosquitoes, except occasionally in the day time, or before going to bed, as I invariably use a mosquito net both at home and in camping out. Sometimes whilst shooting in scrubs about mangrove swamps, or in low lying plains, they are very troublesome in the day time, for the thin dress one is obliged to wear allows of their biting anywhere, but the inducement to go plodding through swamps is so small, that few would try it. These insects abound during the summer in

all the towns. If they are annoying in the evening while one is sitting on the verandah, some dry cow-dung, set burning in a tin pan, will keep nearly all of them off, and the scent is not disagreeable ; this should also be used in small fires around you when camping out, supposing you to be without any tent, or if unable to procure it burn wood, or tea-tree bark, which is very effectual while smouldering.

Sand-flies are very annoying in some parts of the colony.

Ants may be said to rank next in the list of plagues ; every colour has its representative. There are also bull-dog ants, hoppers, ants that smell horribly, and ants that bite horribly, besides hundreds of others. Of those that bite, the white ants are the most destructive. They are really exceedingly dangerous, for if they once get into a house they will eat all the inside of the *pine* wood, leaving, instead of the sound board, a mere shell which the least touch will break through. Hobartown palings, which are used in the building of out-houses, roofing, etc., form an attraction to this insect, and a sharp eye must be kept for the least sign of his mud tunnel. Houses are usually built on bloodwood blocks, or blocks smeared with tar, which the white ant will not attack. He is a bloated looking insect, with a pair of yellow forceps in his head ; he can be heard



distinctly committing his depredations in an old building during a still night. There is a small reddish ant that gives out a disagreeable smell, and a yet smaller rusty coloured one that crawls very slowly; both these frequent houses and attack all the eatables, particularly sugar. The smaller one is a great enemy to bird skins, and is not always easily discerned. All food should be kept in safes, and the legs of the safe placed in pans of water. Boiling water will kill millions of the smelling ants, as they travel in a long train. There is a large black ant that lives in old trees and cases, etc.; its eggs are as large as maggots, and both eggs and ants are greedily devoured by the fowls. The hopper will take a flying leap down upon you from a tree, and bite severely, but the bite of the bull-dog ant is still worse. You may be quietly engaged in lighting a fire in the bush, or in some other domestic employment, when you will feel, as it were, a red-hot needle thrust, *invariably*, into a tender part of your person; the pain continues to increase for some time. This is decidedly the worst kind of sting. There is an ant with a copper-coloured tail, and hundreds of other kinds, but I am only mentioning those which are more particularly to be avoided. Where ants are an annoyance about one's camp, twigs should be stuck into the ground a little to one side, and the



insects will soon be seen running up and down the sticks, which they will continue to do for an indefinite time. I have seen ants, in the neighbourhood of Cleveland Bay, which form a nest of mud several feet in height.

Another description of ant which abounds in every district, and makes an ordinary mound with holes in it, is useful in the following way: "Possum rugs are often a harbour for numbers of fleas, and the best way to get rid of them is to place the rug near one of these ant mounds, taking care to take it in at night, and in a few days the ants will have eaten every flea." Silverfish are very destructive to clothes, as are also small moths; for these, camphor is a good remedy. There is a small hard weevil which spoils quantities of stored grain. Another kind bores into Moreton Bay and tea-tree woods, also into most of the scrub woods. These woods should be avoided as much as possible in building or fencing. The cobra is a most destructive water-worm, but he will not touch boats built of cedar, or anything covered with tar.

There are many beautiful butterflies; one, which is of a bright blue colour, is as large as our English bat; also gaudy locusts, grasshoppers, etc. The native bee, which is about the size of a common house-fly, makes his nest, called "sugar bag," in

the hole of a tree, and does not sting: the honey has a peculiar taste, but is very good. Whilst cutting out the nest, these little bees crawl over one with their sticky legs, but are perfectly harmless. If much comb is found, it should be placed over a bucket in the sun, and the honey will gradually fall into it. There is a very large hornet, which builds little mud nests in the house; his body is as hard as wood, and he possesses a large sting, but I never found him interfere with anyone. The "Tarantula" is common, and sheds his skin like a snake. Scorpions are decidedly uncommon, and centipedes not often met with. There are beetles of every size and colour. I have seen beautiful collections of Queensland insects, arranged on trays, made to fit into cedar boxes; this is also the best way of keeping birds.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WATER—FISH, ALLIGATORS.

FOR the greater part of a year I employed myself in trying creeks and lagoons, which I encountered in my travels, with fly and minnow, and I am satisfied beyond all doubt, that there is scarcely a fish in Queensland that will take a fly; the few I have taken were either very sluggish or not worth eating. From the way in which you have to work your fly to tempt them, it can hardly be called fly-fishing, but must descend to the rank of pot-fishing. A good sportsman would soon give it up in despair; but still I have had good sport, though it merely amounted to pitching in a line and hook, baited with a piece of fish, and pulling out black bream as fast as I possibly could. It is of no use bringing out any fishing gear, unless it be a few hooks on gimp for eels, and hooks bound to strong gut. A good rod is quite thrown away; you can always cut a bush rod. There are plenty of fish in all the lagoons and rivers; black bream, silver bream, a fish called perch, which is not at all like one however, and the barramundi; this last is a noble



specimen of the finny tribe ; he runs up to 20 lbs. or more ; his peculiarity consists in the very large size of his scales. I have taken him in tidal waters, inland rivers, and lagoons, using a small fish as bait.

Eels are to be found nearly everywhere, and run up to an enormous size ; they will bite best after sundown, when you may pull them out as fast as you like with anything eatable or uneatable. The best plan is to light a fire on the edge of the lagoon and fish alongside it : the eels will come in dozens attracted by the light. Fresh water turtle are very troublesome whilst fishing in the lagoon, as they often snap one's hook with their bony mouths. They are good to eat, and are generally the size of an ordinary plate ; their heads should be cut off directly you land them. There are large catfish in the Burdekin and other rivers, with flat and bony heads, and armed with spikes everywhere ; they utter a sound like the dogfish. But there is not much sport in this line. I confess that I prefer using the seine net to anything. I have had more fun myself, and afforded more fun to friends, with a small forty yard seine, which I had for two years, than with either gun, rod, or anything else in Queensland. I only used it in the tidal rivers, but I have often filled the two pack-saddle bags, besides another large bag, in the course of two or three hours, and sent the horse

home to be relieved of his burden and return for a fresh supply. But it was not only the quantity, but the peculiarities of some of the fish, that rendered the hauling so exciting; the ordinary varieties were, mullet of two kinds, bream, flatheads, the palmer, a splendid fish with a red eye; a large blue-looking fish, with his nose overhanging his mouth, which was the best eating of any; also a well-flavoured fish resembling a John Dory in shape; besides these, there were whiting and guard fish, which are allowed by everyone to be the greatest delicacies of their kind in Australia; and many other edible fish too numerous to mention: the larger ones were always split and smoked. All kinds of "curios" come up in the net: fish of all colours and shapes. There were generally two or three stingarees, which resemble the skate; they run up to a huge size: the ordinary ones have a tail about three feet long, and on the back of the tail, near its junction with the body, there is a poisonous sting over three inches long; a man has been known to lose the use of his hand for months owing to a thrust from this spike, which is jagged down its whole length.

Fair sport may be had in the River Brisbane: the best bait is a prawn, of which there are plenty in the river. Breakfast Creek, two or three miles below the town, is one of the spots, where, with a rod, you



may kill bream, flatheads, and Jewfish; the latter are very handsome: the inside of their mouth is orange colour. The fish they call perch, which I never caught anywhere else, is to be found here; it has a sort of double chin, red eyes, and golden appearance, and makes a noise when caught. My last bag there was 9lb. weight, consisting of eight bream, one perch, one Jewfish, and a catfish. The catfish makes a curious noise, and smells very disagreeable when brought to land. Nearly all Queensland fish have spikes on their bodies. There is yet one peculiar fish, which I had almost forgotten, and which is worthy of being mentioned, owing to his possessing such a good flavour. I have generally found him in streams of clear running water; he has wattles from his mouth, and a long wavy sort of body. Two or three are usually together, and they keep their noses on the ground up streams. Though I have tried every dodge, I have never succeeded in getting them to notice any bait, even when dropped right before them. The fish I preserved, I painted inside with arsenical paste and outside with copal varnish; and they have remained in good condition, and kept their colours for years.

*Alligators.*—Alligators or crocodiles are common in the rivers north of Rockhampton, including the Fitzroy, on which that town is built. I have never



been able to determine, satisfactorily, whether they are alligators or crocodiles; for though I have referred to the best books that I could procure in Queensland, on the subject, I have found the description tally in *both* cases, in the most important points. I imagine these Queensland monsters to be alligators, owing to their size: for, I have shot crocodiles in the Nile, and never saw one more than about ten feet long, whereas I measured one of the former myself, and found him to be 19 feet 1 inch in length, from the tip of his nose to the end of his tail. Some say the one lives entirely in fresh water, while the other must have access to the salt. These in Queensland are found several miles up the rivers, and right down to the sea; some big fellows I have known, for more than two years, to frequent the same spot thirty miles up a river, of course being obliged to quit it during a fresh, but returning as soon as the water had subsided. I have found them in lagoons, miles away from any river, and having no connexion, in the shape of a rivulet, with one. I have seen one of these creatures swim across an arm of the sea, in the harbour of Port Denison. We were once camped on some lagoons in the North Kennedy district; they were dark, cold, deep lagoons, covered with pink water-lilies, and surrounded by dense scrub and steep banks: we had hobbled our

horses out, and were enjoying a pipe after supper, when suddenly we were aroused by a loud noise, something between a screech and a yell, accompanied with the smashing of timber: then all was still: we each seized a fire-stick and hurried to the spot from whence the sound seemed to proceed; we soon discovered one of our horses standing on the bank, trembling violently, and quite wet, as much from copious sweating caused by fear, as from splashing in the lagoon. She had deep gashes down the side of each cheek. She had evidently gone down the steep bank to drink, and, being short hobbled, had made a good deal of noise about it. Attracted by the sound, the alligator must have seized her with its claws, for, from the nature of the marks, they could not have been caused by the teeth; but the noise made by the mare, together with her frantic struggles to free herself, must have frightened the reptile and liberated its victim. We rubbed the fat of some wild ducks on her wounds, but though she got well gradually, she was never the same mare again.

A man whom I knew was bathing in the Burdekin river, in about four feet of water, when he was seized by an alligator: he however shrieked so loud that it let go its hold, and he escaped, but with his leg dreadfully torn from the thigh downwards.



When, however, it can fairly see the nature and size of its victim, I have remarked that nothing will deter this reptile from seizing it: for instance, a favourite dog was swimming in one of our northern rivers, when an alligator rose to the surface of the water within twenty yards of him, and swam towards him. We shouted, again and again to the dog, and fired shots from a revolver at the alligator, but neither reptile nor dog took the slightest notice of us, and the latter was quietly taken down. On another occasion, a mob of cattle was being driven over a shallow in the river, they were all across with the exception of a weakly calf, when an alligator was seen swimming along the surface of the water, from a deep hole, down the stream. Stones were thrown, stockwhips were cracked, and he took no notice; however, in this instance, fortune favoured the intended victim, the calf reached the shore just in time, and the monster passed down the shallow to the deep hole below. Alligators are common in the Pioneer river, Northern Queensland. There are numerous sugar plantations and stations along its banks. The squatters cannot keep a cattle dog, and the planters are always losing their setters and kangaroo hounds. These dogs, I am convinced from my own observation, are generally taken in small lagoons, within a mile, or so, of



the river proper : for, as more game abounds about the lagoons than on the river bank, the dogs are taken there for shooting, etc., and when swimming about to cool themselves, they are seized. A gentleman was out duck shooting on a lagoon within a mile of his house, when walking through some long reeds, he suddenly descried what appeared to be a scrub-turkey's (*Talegalla*) nest ; he was preparing for some sport, when his setter, who had been snuffing about the supposed bird's nest, ventured near some of the long reeds, and was suddenly snapped at by an alligator ; the dog gave a yell and a bound and escaped its formidable enemy, but the sportsman was now within five feet of the alligator, and face to face with him. He drew the shot from both barrels, and rammed down a couple of bullets, tearing off a piece of his shirt to use as a patch, and thereby ensuring a tight fit, but never taking his eyes off the alligator, who lay perfectly motionless. He told us afterwards that his hands shook so much from excitement that he could scarcely load. He must, however, have regained his coolness very quickly, for he placed the ball so truly through the beast's eye, that its eyelid was not injured ; it then rushed past him, he giving it a second ball in the teeth *en passant*, and buried its head in a tuft of grass, giving vent to a hissing sound. S— then cooey'd for assistance,

and a rifle was brought, but the alligator was dead. It only measured nine feet, but judging by its teeth, which were black and decayed, like those of an old dog, it could not have been young ; it had lost a portion of its near fore leg. There were two well trodden tracks between the nest and the water, the water being a small deep lagoon about 30 yards from the nest, and one of a long chain of lagoons ; there was also a circle, of about 15 feet in diameter, trodden evenly round the nest, as though an old treadmill horse had been at work there ; the nest itself was made of grass, and fine sticks in short pieces, and contained 64 eggs in different layers. This alligator was, no doubt, the female guarding her nest. The eggs seem to be prodigious in number, but we are told that quantities of the young are eaten by the bull alligators as soon as they are hatched by the heat of the sun. The eggs are about the size of a turkey's but not the same shape, being equal in size at both ends. They are of a dirty white, with tiny dents in them, and a little black spot every here and there, giving them rather the appearance of some kinds of marble. They are of an elastic nature when full, and will *give* on being pushed. They *crack* easily, but always hold together, for there is a tough skin underneath the shell ; we blew young alligators out of some of them. When fresh, the eggs are not bad eating.



Some South Sea Islanders, employed on one of the plantations, told us that they had run a calf belonging to their master, into the water. Two alligators shoved off, if I may so express it, from the back of the lagoon towards it; but the Islanders swam in, rescued the calf, and when asked if they were not afraid, said, they found they could swim faster than the alligators, and I quite believe their story. The way that these reptiles catch most of their victims, is by quietly swimming along the edge of the lagoons or rivers by night; they glide quite under the bank, keeping their two legs next to it, flush with their bodies, and thus are enabled to seize any unlucky calf or wallaby that comes down to drink. I have often found the undigested feet of both in their stomachs, also the bills of water birds. They seem to fight very much, and most of them are minus one fore foot, or bear marks of teeth on their bodies. They are great cowards out of the water, and very difficult to stalk, in fact much harder than a duck, that is to say to approach quite close to; shoes must be taken off and great patience exercised. The crocodile of the Nile always has a bird near him, who wakes him at the approach of danger; but the Queensland alligator has no such sentry, and consequently is nearly always on the look out. Whenever I have shot at alligators and missed them, I have



noticed that they invariably, after having plunged into the water, come to the surface for a few seconds, usually only showing their heads ; they then, however, disappear for hours. In taking aim, the best spot to fire at is behind and a little below the jaw ; it is very hard to kill one outright. They so often, though mortally wounded, manage to struggle into the water. One was shot with a long Enfield at about fifty yards ; the ball entered just behind the jaw, and the blood spouted out in one thick stream, he had about six yards to get to the water ; he accomplished five, and died just on the brink. Though the hide is very thick, a ball will, most certainly, pierce it, but it is not likely to touch a vital part.

It was a great joke with two of us that, in skinning an alligator we could not find any heart, though it is to be supposed that he had one in common with every other animal, yet, all we could find was a small piece of tough-looking substance in that part of the body where this important organ is supposed to exist.

The best time for finding alligators out basking is in the winter months—May, June, and July—for then the water is cold, and they lie out on the banks during the warmest part of the day. A very favourite haunt is where a small creek empties itself into the river : at the junction of the two there is usually a

corner of sand backed by a few reeds: if you do not find one there, look for his tracks, both under the water at the edge, and on the land, for he leaves the impression of his big claws and tail. When the alligator is not molested, he will come out day after day in exactly the same spot, and it is curious to see the track he leaves: it is in the shape of a horse-shoe, the portions not joined being, of course, the water: so that he evidently creeps out, basks, and when he has stayed long enough, turns leisurely round, and back to the water.

Owing to floods, these sand banks are left, by the ebbing of the waters, in large ribs, or ridges, and by crawling along on one's stomach, one may get within a few yards of the alligator, having first taken the bearings from some neighbouring high ground. When you suppose you are near enough, as you raise your head, keep your rifle at your shoulder, at the "*present*," for the probability is that he will be off at almost the first movement you make. Some have an idea that he can glide into the water without making any commotion in it whatever: the shape of his body, certainly, allows him to make less than any other animal, but there are always signs left on the surface, and in shallow water he is a most clumsy beast, stirring up the mud with his legs and tail.

I recollect one who had got into a narrow channel



in about three feet of water, being chased by two men with stockwhips : his pursuers were gaining upon him, and he was doing his best, evidently in a dreadful fright, when he suddenly disappeared in a deep hole at the end of the channel.

It must not be supposed that because you can jump across a creek you can safely bathe in it. I remember once bathing, in company with a friend, in such a place, at the falls of the river Burdekin : a more beautiful looking spot for a bathe could hardly be imagined : clear running water, very cold, between high cliffs, forming successions of rocky baths ; this channel measured 15 feet by 3 or 4 across, with a miniature waterfall here and there ; it joined the river again, about half a mile lower down. We enjoyed our bath, camped that night on a high bank, overlooking the falls, and returned at sunrise next morning to fish, when, to our horror, we found the tracks of a large alligator, which had just left our bathing establishment, and had gone down, the whole way, alongside the channel to the river. The channel swarmed with fish, and we could find no bottom in the holes with a 12 foot pole ; so we congratulated ourselves on a narrow escape.

I know another chain of narrow lagoons, which formed the boundary on one side of a paddock. No alligators had ever been seen about there, when sud-



denly one was discovered basking inside the paddock, about fifty feet from the water, and evidently waiting for a calf: two more, a few days afterwards, made their appearance, also inside the paddock: we could find no pole long enough to reach to the bottom of some parts of this creek.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FRUITS, FLOWERS, WOODS.

*Fruits.*—Wild fruits are not only scarce in Queensland for such a large country, but what few there are are almost worthless ; for if the fruit looks fine, it is invariably nearly all stone. There is a large plum, growing on a fine shady tree, the fruit is crimson, acid in taste, and with a large stone in it ; a wild banana, full of black seed, but with very little flesh ; two or three kinds of little berries, like currants in appearance, growing on low bushes, very sweet, but nearly all stone ; and a small black fig, growing at the edges of the scrubs and in creeks : the leaf is very rough, and the fruit good, though small ; I believe its botanical name is “*figus aspera*.” The milky juice of the young shoots of this tree is employed medicinally by the Blacks, and is said to heal wounds. Wild raspberries grow well in some parts, but do not possess much flavour. Then there is a small kind of plum, growing on a very tall tree in the scrubs, and another on a thick, small leaved bush, which I have found on the coast.

There is a tempting looking fruit, which grows as a parasite, on large shady trees, but is full of seeds,

and, strange to say, insects. The quandang is edible, but nearly all stone; there are wild grapes, and many other kinds of fruit; but I would caution anyone from eating anything because it looks nice, or that he may find in a Black's camp, for they put several poisonous fruits through a certain process of water and fire, which renders them harmless.

I knew James Morrill at Port Denison, who was nineteen years with the Blacks, and found his way back to civilization in 1863. I will mention some of the roots that he subsisted on during his wild life, and give them according to his own description, for, if any man, lost in the Bush, knew how to find them, he would not die of *starvation*, at all events—First, there is a root which grows at the tops of the mountains, in red clay soil: it is white, sweet, firm, and dry: lower down, at the foot of the mountains, in the scrub, there is one, soft, and moist. Another, growing in the grass, is white, like a turnip, and with a small thin leaf: and one which resembles it, but is smaller and darker in colour: again, there is another, which runs in and out among the grass, with a little blue flower. The blue water lily common in the lagoons is an edible plant, the seed and root being excellent; there is a small creeping leguminous plant, with three narrow, long, sharp, pointed leaves upon a common stalk, bearing a flower something



like our cultivated tea, and with roots like that of our carrot ; it grows abundantly in every plain, valley, or creek bank. A wild citron, about the size of a marble, growing on a handsome bush, is to be found in inland scrubs. The inside of the top of the common palm-tree is good and sweet, something like a chestnut, and there is plenty of it.

Though not coming under the category of fruits, I will here mention a certain white *grub*, which is as large as a man's finger, and has a pair of sharp nippers in its head. It is found in dead and rotten trees in the scrubs. I have eaten these *grubs*, and found them excellent, and were the French to get hold of them, they would discard snails at once ; they taste like rich cream, but no one could get them out of the trees without a tomahawk. I once heard a man call the forest trees in Queensland "Never-greens," and, with very few exceptions, the title is quite applicable, for the leaves on the Eucalypti are so scrumpy, and have such a faded, washed-out look, that *green* is by no means the prevailing colour in these skeleton-looking forests : the *white* stems of the trees strike one more : the glorious Leichardt tree, and some others growing about the creeks, are exceptions. The bloodwood, also, has a fresher look. The Moreton Bay chestnut is a handsome tree, growing in the creeks ; it is even cultivated on account of

its handsome appearance. Swamp mahogany and apple trees are beautifully green and shady; they are neither of them very large, but twisted and gnarled; why the latter are called apple trees it is impossible to say; in January they bear a profusion of white blossoms, which give a delicate and not unpleasant smell. Very frequently a large lump or swelling may be observed on the trunk of this tree, a yard or so from the ground; it is as well to recollect that on its being cut open this usually gives a quart or more of good water; the wood is good and tough.

Fine specimens of trees grow in the Burnett district, about the new Gympie diggings: huge iron barks as straight as arrows, gigantic pine trees, and the "Bunya Bunya" (*Araucaria*), for which this district is famous; this latter bears a nut like an enormous cedar cone, the cone containing a nut in each division; the Blacks feed on it greedily: it rather resembles the Brazil nut in flavour. The Government does not allow this tree to be cut at all, as it affords a great deal of food to the Blacks, who flock in from all parts during the "Bunya season." It is an exceedingly handsome tree for a lawn, and cultivated largely; there are whole forests in the Bunya Bunya mountains.

But where the vegetation is greenest, and rankest



in masses, is in tropical scrubs on some parts of the coast ; there everything seems to grow as in a hot-house. The soil is always damp, for not a single ray of sun penetrates, and is composed of vegetable mould. The air is still as death ; tall palm trees rear their graceful heads high above you, while below their feathery leaves hang large bunches of red berries ; vines cross around and over you, in every direction, till they culminate on the top of the trees, forming a mass of leaves and flowers quite impervious to the light. There are other vines, like gigantic cables, a good six inches through, stretching away overhead through the forks of the trees—reminding one of Blondin's rope—till the ends suddenly shoot into the earth. Large stag's-horn ferns, and other smaller varieties, may be found clinging as parasites to the palms and other trees. The umbrella-tree, with its large dark shiny leaves, of which there are usually five growing at the end of each stalk, and surmounted by its crimson flowers, forming brilliant stars, each red spray being fifteen inches long, and contrasting well with the dark foliage ; and the quandang-tree, rearing its stately head above all the others, with its more delicate leaves, which are partially red, and its blue fruit lying around the trunk. Wild jessamine, and large white lilies, with bulbous roots, grow in the lowest parts of the scrubs and scent the



air. The wild nutmeg grows at the edge in good sized bushes, both male and female. The fruit, though small, is perfect, showing the crimson mace inside. Wild ginger of an excellent quality is found everywhere. Wild passionfruit, bearing red flowers, handsomer than the cultivated ones, creeps in and out of the bushes. The Moreton Bay fig affords a pleasant shade, and is well worthy of a place in anyone's garden, and the cedar grows to a great size, and bears a pretty, delicate leaf.

There are many other dark foliaged trees, and handsome plants and creepers in the scrubs, also several varieties of convolvulus, one of which is very large, and dark blue in colour. There is a tree, the leaf of which resembles that of a palm, which is often found trailing along the ground, and is covered with sharp prickles; however, inside this coat of thorns there is a valuable cane, resembling a malacca. Another kind of cane, something like it, but bare, smooth, hard, and black, springs from the ground, and grows straight up over the head of the tallest tree, and comes down on the other side. I know one that has been in constant use for years as a clothes line; it is about 100 yards long; they also make excellent handles for rakes and brooms, being very tough.

But though these tropical scrubs are so luxuriant

and beautiful, they are not without their dangerous drawbacks, for there is one plant growing in them which is really deadly in its effects, that is to say, deadly in the same way that one would apply the term to fire, as if a certain proportion of any one's body is burnt by the *stinging-tree*, death will be the result. I would as soon pass through fire, as fall into one of these trees. They are found growing from two or three inches high to ten and fifteen feet; in the old ones the stem is whiteish, and red berries usually grow on the top. It emits a peculiar and disagreeable smell, but it is best known by its leaf, which is nearly round, and having a point at the top, is jagged all round the edge, like the nettle at home; all the leaves are large, some larger than a saucer.

Sometimes, whilst shooting turkeys in the scrubs, I have entirely forgotten the stinging-tree, till warned of its close proximity by its smell, and have then found myself almost in a little forest of them. I was only once stung, and that slightly; its effects are curious; it leaves no mark, but the pain is maddening, and for months afterwards the part when touched is tender, particularly during rainy weather, or when it gets wet, in washing, &c. I have seen a man, who treats ordinary pain lightly, roll on the ground in agony after being stung, and I have



known a horse so completely mad, after getting into a grove of these trees, that he rushed open mouthed at every one who approached him, and had, at last, to be shot in the scrub.

Dogs when stung will rush about whining piteously, biting pieces from the affected part. The small stinging-trees, a few inches high, are as dangerous as any, being so hard to see and seriously imperilling one's ankles.

This shrub is usually found growing amongst palm trees.

In climbing any of the scrub trees, beware of snakes and green ants, which latter build their nests, composed of dead leaves, in the branches, on being disturbed they drop on to one and sting sharply.

There is a small description of wait-a-bit thorn bearing a sweet scented yellow flower.

I never searched much for the Flora of Australia, and though there are some handsome ones, the country cannot be said to rejoice *largely* in flowers.

There is a pink flower found growing in the grass somewhat resembling a peony, also a white one of the same species; the root consists of a large bulb. A species of large everlasting flower, yellow in colour, is common. Many of the shrubs flower, and there are various sorts of "Hibiscus." Some of the flowers possess a delicate scent; more are found on the



plains than anywhere else, but one beautiful little flower called the fringed violet grows in the grass on the forest land ; the plant resembles a very delicate rush, and bears two or three flowers of a light lilac colour, star-shaped and fringed ; the root consists of small bulbs the size of marbles, and as sweet as sugar to the taste. This flower will not keep for an hour when plucked.

There are wild peas and beans, the flowers of the latter insignificant, not so the pods, which grow three feet long and more, containing a bean the size of a watch ; most of these beans are poisonous.

There are various wholesome herbs ; fat-hen, when boiled, is almost equal to spinach. The leaves and stalks are picked when young and tender ; some of the leaves incline to pink underneath.

Pig-weed is a small, running, thick-leaved plant, inclining to pink about the leaves and stalk ; it is either eaten cooked, or raw with vinegar, and mixed with wild cress forms an excellent substitute for salad.

A diminutive wild cucumber grows thickly in some scrubs. There are various specimens of ferns, but none of the large tree-ferns.

## CHAPTER X.

### SQUATTING.

THOUGH possessing more faith in agriculture with regard to the future success of the colony, yet I base this faith largely upon the greater amount of rains falling to the share of those living on the coast country, where soil and climate is best suited for cultivation. These rains being denied in a great degree to the inland country.

As wool has been as yet *the* great export from Queensland, I shall commence with a few remarks concerning sheep. Taking into consideration the new system of fencing in the runs which has been commenced in Queensland, a brighter future may reasonably be supposed to be in store for the wool grower, if only that great enemy *drought* would keep out of the way.

Where this system of fencing has been resorted to in the other colonies, the yield of wool has increased from 2 lbs. per sheep to  $2\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. and more.

The principal advantages the sheep farmer will derive in fencing his run into several enclosures, and allowing the sheep to roam at will, will be the supe-

riority of the wool, the increase in the number of sheep the land will be capable of depasturing, and the favourable conditions afforded for lambing, when so much difficulty is usually experienced in providing green food for the sheep, whilst the lambs are too young to move far. This will be readily understood when it is pointed out that the overcrowding of a large number of sheep in a fold in a warm climate must ultimately produce an injurious effect on the animals, which exhibits itself in the lightness of the wool grown, and also in time on the general constitution. The early morning and the cool of the evening, the very best times for allowing the sheep to feed, are lost to them. They are brought out in a feverish state in broad sunlight, to graze and make the most of their time during hours when, under a more natural system, they would be found seeking shade and repose.

The approaches to a sheep station are completely bare, no sign of vegetation for a long way round about, so that the sheep, after having been released in the morning from their cramped fold, have to traverse a good bit of country to their feeding grounds.

This new fencing consists of wire, and is usually put up by contract, costing somewhere about £25 to £30 a mile. A certain number of acres would be



fenced off, say 11,000, and gradually subdivided, so that the sheep can be shifted from one paddock to another as the grass is eaten down.

Several stations, which up to the present time have barely paid the working expenses, would doubtless show a handsome return if managed under this new system ; which is also a great saving in labour, especially where shepherds are getting 30s. a week, as many are doing in some of the out districts.

The "outside squatters," the pioneers of sheep-farming, have a hard time of it, and should be most liberally dealt with, as any one will allow who visits such districts in the "far west" as the "Warrego," "Paroo," down the "Darling," etc., during a time of drought. Such a drought has been visiting this inland country and far north of it for the last three years, and the consequences have been grievous: waterholes drying up in all directions, those that held out for a time being subsequently rendered perfectly useless by the mobs of "travelling" sheep from over the border, and other parts, exhausting them, and leaving many of their carcasses to pollute the remaining small quantity of water. This method of travelling the sheep has to be resorted to when the country is short of water and grass, but it is often most disastrous in its effects: the whole country becomes devastated: the sheep die by hundreds: at

length there is no grass or water to travel them to, and the owner has, in despair, to cast them completely adrift, and flee for his own life. Many of these runs have been overstocked, and when owners of sheep think more of quality than quantity, then will there be less necessity for "travelling," which is so ruinous and often unfair to those who *do* keep the amount of their stock within reasonable limits.

No rule can be laid down as to station properties paying : it depends upon distance from port, whether the run is well watered, and whether fattening herbs grow upon it, whether, in the case of natural grasses failing, artificial would be likely to succeed : how near it is to a "boiling down" establishment, where the fat stock can be turned into tallow, &c.

Though many of the oldest stations on the Darling Downs have made fortunes, and some of the "inside" country is doing well, we must regard the days of making rapid fortunes by sheep farming as over, for the present at least. People now know that the breeding of *numbers* no longer pays, and that the surest way to ensure success is to get rid of all worthless breeds, and by keeping up a stock of Australian merinos, or any equally valuable sheep, so ensure their station brand taking a high position in the wool market. Several new systems of wool washing have been introduced, and not before they are wanted :



Some wool sent latterly from Queensland was so bad that it did not pay its expenses of freight to Sydney ; this is an extreme case, but it has been so much the rule to send away badly washed wool, and, without reference to quality, to bundle the cross-bred fleeces and finer wools into the same bale, that unless greater care is exercised for the future, the colony will lose its character as a fine-wool producing country. When these bales containing mixed wools are opened, the *buyer* would naturally remark, "How do I know how much fine and how much coarse wool is here?" The 'brand' is remembered, and the grower would probably not get so much for this mixed lot as if he sent the different qualities in different bales ; attention should also be paid to other sorts of sorting, *i.e.* packing the fleeces according to their descriptions, and marking those descriptions on the bales as hoggets, wethers, ewes, &c.; also to pack the badly washed wool, and the "pieces" from the neck and breech in separate bales. Ten thousand indifferent sheep cost as much to keep as the same number of well-bred ones ; it is therefore to be hoped that a system of close cutting will be carried out, and all coarse and indifferent sheep sent to the "pots," while their places will be filled up by well-bred ewes, and the best rams obtainable placed among them.

Under the old system the sheep were washed



before being sheared, but many are now turning their attention to shearing in the grease and washing the wool afterwards. A large scouring establishment for carrying out this process on an extensive scale has been erected at "Canning Downs," (a station situated on the Darling Downs). During the season eighty men are engaged at this establishment shearing and scouring ; this latter process is carried out by means of water heated to 90 degrees or more, according to the condition of the wool, into which is put a composition of soft soap. But on many stations, owing to various reasons, the old system of washing the sheep in cold water is still being carried on, as being more convenient and less expensive ; yet, though wool washed in this manner may fetch a fair price where ordinary care has been bestowed ; it will be found that the only paying method will be that in which the best modern appliances have been had recourse to.

The number of sheep in the colony at the present time may be estimated at over 8,557,755. This, considering the severe drought which the colony suffered from in 1866, and other drawbacks consequent on the large numbers of flocks travelling northwards, represents a very fair increase on the number set down in the return for 1862, viz., 4,345,901.

But though the "outside squatter" has frequently such a hard time of it, as I mentioned at the commencement of this chapter, it must not by any means be thought that those on the long-established stations of the Darling Downs have such troubles and privations to undergo: for while the "outsider" is in a country depending upon nature entirely for a supply of water, art has come to the assistance of nature on the Downs, for the squatters have erected dams there at a great cost, by which an unfailing supply of water is always obtained.

Could a large system of irrigation, by means of canals, with tank embankments and sluices, be adopted, such as has proved so successful in India, the squatters in the western districts would be enabled to stock their country, without fear of losing their stock, to cultivate their paddocks, and to wash their wool in pure water. There is an abundant supply of rainfall on both slopes of the dividing range to ensure a permanent supply of water; but the paucity of the colony will not allow of such a project being attempted for some time to come.

Many of the head stations on the Darling Downs resemble, in point of conveniences and luxuries, a gentleman's country house in old England: noble mansions built of brick, and constructed with all the most modern appliances, surrounded by gardens



and vineyards, sloping down to a fine sheet of water. Every choice fruit and flower suitable to these latitudes is found growing in profusion, while shady trees and beautiful creepers protect both house and verandah from the rays of the sun.

A large quantity of wine is manufactured on these stations, which is distributed in the most liberal manner to both guests and station hands. The crops of oranges are so heavy during some seasons that the fruit has been carted away by carriers at two shillings a gross.

The internal arrangements of the houses are perfectly in accordance with the neatness and luxury met with outside, while the "*table*" literally groans with its weight of good things, backed up by sets of plate and silver befitting any residence. In the event of a visitor taking a letter of introduction to any one of these older stations, he would be on the safer side if he put a suit of dress clothes into his "swag" with his other things. Hundreds of head of wild cattle infest many of these stations, and in fact are found in places all over the colony. The bulls in the herds are worthless as meat, and being exceedingly troublesome, are shot down, as the best means of getting rid of them. Wherever horses or cattle are neglected, they form themselves into large herds which rapidly increase, overspreading the



country, drinking up the water, and frequently carrying off with them the quieter "mobs;" the bulls charging down on the stockmen, and preventing the cows and heifers being yarded.

In New South Wales hundreds of horses have been annually shot on some of the stations, and latterly, many waterholes had to be fenced in, the wild horses and cattle dying from thirst on the edge of these waterholes, which they could see but could not get at. But where the runs are being fenced in this state of things is improving, and it is to be hoped that, ere long, Queensland will be able to say, "we have changed all that."

Preserved meats, in large quantities, are now being shipped from Australia to all parts of the world, and notwithstanding the enormous over-production of beef and mutton, the "outlets" for getting rid of them are increasing year by year, and *will* increase, provided the greatest care is exercised in getting the meat into the best condition for exportation. Many of these meat-preserving companies are being formed in Queensland. The prospectus of the "Queensland Meat-Preserving Company," states that "the capital of the company is to be £10,000, in shares of £10 each, and under the provisions of the Limited Liability Act. The object of the company is the preserving and salting of beef by

Morgan's process, and the preservation of mutton by the bisulphate of lime, for export purposes." Taking into consideration the fattening pastures of the colony, more particularly those along the coast, cattle are likely to yield a handsome profit, now that there appears to be a ready market for them.

Many at home, whose sons have gone on to stations in Queensland, think them hardly used if they only get £50 to £80 a year, but they must recollect that, however good they may be, this is perhaps all that a stockman may be worth, particularly as there are plenty to rush into his shoes directly he leaves the station.

So much has been written about squatting in Queensland that it would be going over old ground again were I to attempt to describe life on the stations. I have contented myself with mentioning one or two of the later improved methods in connexion with this pursuit.

## CHAPTER XI.

AGRICULTURE—EXPORTS AND IMPORTS—SUGAR CULTIVATION—FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE COLONY—HORSES, ETC.—SOUTH SEA ISLAND LABOUR, ETC. ETC.

No country ever yet attained to greatness that did not interest herself in agriculture, yet the very fact of mentioning this word, in connexion with the colony of Queensland four or five years ago, would have called forth a derisive laugh from most men. It is true that wheat and other cereals, together with a few fruits, have been grown successfully for many years in the southern parts of the colony ; but as for sugar, cotton, maize, &c. being cultivated, it was a thing unheard of ; and we have to thank such men as Captain Hope and a few of our other pioneers in sugar cultivation, for proving, at great expense and labour, that it is to these tropical productions that Queensland will, before long, attain such importance, and will take a position before the older sugar producing countries, as the West Indies, Mauritius, &c. This is no idle boast, but based upon facts, as any-



one may judge for himself by visiting the various plantations of the colony.

It may be as well to commence this important subject by a short statement of the imports and exports for the year 1867, published in the *Brisbane Courier*.

“During the year 1865, the value of our imports exceeded our exports by nearly a million and a half pounds sterling, and in 1866 the disproportion on the same side was over a million, but during 1867 the balance was on the other side. For the first time in our history as an independent colony the order of things was reversed, and our exports exceeded our imports by nearly half a million sterling.

With reference to the imports for 1865, it was found that nearly a million sterling was spent for articles chiefly the produce of agriculture, and which might be raised within the colony.

There was also a large expenditure for goods easy of manufacture, and which might also be produced here. Now that we are just entering on a new land system, and that so many on the one hand are about to engage in farming, while on the other hand the actual farmers are in great anxiety as to the articles for which a ready market and a fair price may be obtained, it will be well to consider how we are progressing towards supplying our own wants in those

things commonly grown, and to cast about for openings for other and more profitable application of the soil. But little tendency was shown in the year 1866 over 1865 towards a reduction in the importation of agricultural produce, but during 1867 there was a marked change in this respect.

In the former year a few articles, such as maize, potatoes, fruit, hay, butter, and such like, cost us over a quarter of a million ; but in 1867 for the same articles, only about £120,000, or considerably less than one-half was sent out of the colony for articles of this description.

It will scarcely be conceived that the reduction on one article—maize—is close upon £40,000 ; on fruit, not including bottled or dried fruits, £20,000 ; on potatoes, £18,000 ; on butter, £14,000 ; hay and straw over £17,000 ; grain, other than maize, £10,000. Cheese, bacon, and vegetables, £10,000 more. In round numbers, here is £130,000 saved to the colony by growing our own maize and potatoes, making our own butter and cheese, and raising our own bacon and vegetables. The item of tobacco is included in the gross amount mentioned above, and there is no single article in the list so likely, with careful management, to yield to the farmer a handsome return as tobacco. A very few acres will yield a good sum to the grower, and the whole apparatus for manufacturing may be



erected at less than a tithe of the cost of the plant necessary for another industry much in favour at the present time.

Another class of goods, also the produce of the soil, which has been costing us about a quarter of a million annually, consists of sugar and molasses, tea, coffee, and cocoa.

Reference need scarcely be made in this article to the *great* interest at present attaching to the cultivation of sugar, for is it not written in all the chronicles? but, up to the present, very little impression has been made upon the import trade, the difference between 1866 and 1867 being £3000 in favour of the colony last year. That is no doubt only the beginning of the end of the importation of sugar into the market of Queensland from ports beyond its own coast line, for with respect to that article at least, we are bound to annihilate the import trade, and instead of £110,000 for that article per year, get an ever-increasing surplus to swell the amount in the list of imports.

Our tea and coffee account shows little variation either way, and we appear likely to support foreign agriculturists for many years to come by the importation of these articles of daily consumption. Yet it is not easy to see why we should continue to do so, almost without an effort to produce these



articles. For thirty years the coffee plant has been grown in Brisbane with almost unvarying success, and we believe that the enterprising agriculturist, who shall become our pioneer coffee planter on a scale sufficiently large to work economically, but not too large for proper supervision and control, will be amply remunerated.

Imported drinks have been costing us nearly another quarter of a million per annum.

Rum is being made on several plantations, and it may fairly be presumed that 1868 will see the last of the importation of this article.

Wine has for some time been made in the neighbourhood of Brisbane, and several vineyards are being formed in other parts of the colony; there is also a good opening for breweries.

If consumers and producers would each do their part to annihilate the importation of agricultural produce, scarcely another year would go over our heads before the work would be accomplished, and the colony would have attained the position of an independent producer instead of being a dependent consumer."

Our earlier planters, together with some of our squatters, have all along foreseen the great wealth which must accrue to the colony whenever its very rich lands were cultivated. Working-men and

others certainly made attempts to farm on a small scale, but the land laws of those times, (some few years ago,) and the state of the country generally, crippled them. The great agricultural districts round Warwick, Toowoomba, &c., have been growing wheat and other cereals, together with fruits adapted for this more southern clime, for some years, and most successfully too; but it is more particularly upon the tropical productions that the future agricultural prospects of the colony will depend. This will be the more readily understood when it is stated that extensive districts here and there along the whole line of seaboard from Moreton Bay to the far north are peculiarly adapted for agriculture generally, and for producing sugar and maize in particular. Districts formed of the richest black soil plains; and alluvial deposits along the banks of ever-running rivers: these coast districts are visited by regular rains, and have been *proved* by experienced planters, and the result has by far exceeded their expectations.

Look what other sugar countries have done and are doing, and why is Queensland not to do the same? Yes, and better, for, so far, no disease of any description has attacked the canes, they grow better than in the West Indies, not only as to size and yield of saccharine matter, but also because canes



will "Ratoon" well in Queensland that never would in the West Indies.

The Mauritius has applied to Queensland for canes. We have a certain market for sugar on the spot for years to come at high prices, the consumption for the 100,000 people of the colony, owing chiefly to the quantities taken by stations, where so much tea is always drunk, will keep up the local market for a long time.

Rum is also a very saleable article; who will say that there is not then a great future in store for the colony? Men of capital and energy are only wanting to carry it out; and many have already commenced in the various districts.

I take the following from the last of a series of excellent articles which appeared under the heading of "Sugar Cultivation in Queensland," the extract is from the *Queenslander* of October 24, 1868.

"That Queensland can successfully compete with other sugar growing colonies may be fairly allowed, from our having millions of acres of background whereon can be raised houses, cattle, corn, beef, mutton, and all plantation necessities at the cheapest rate, without importing, as is generally the case in other places, and that at a very exorbitant price. In the West Indies and the Mauritius mules cost



£40 each, and have to be stall-fed, and they are not much better than our £10 horses.

The Emperor of Madagascar some time since supplied the Mauritius with fat cattle at £6 per head, about half as big as our £4 bullocks, thus making meat there three times dearer than in Queensland. In Cuba, according to Reid, they have one negro to every two acres of cane. In the Mauritius, according to De Keating, they have one coolie to every single acre, costing about £27 per annum, which is about equal to the cost of the South Sea Islanders. In the interior of Java molasses are sent down the rivers from the want of fuel to distil them.

In Demerara coals have to be purchased at 37s 6d per hogshead, but in Queensland there is no lack of timber of the very best quality for firewood, which only requires cutting up and carting. Such are some of our comparative advantages, and there is nothing to hinder us from competing with any country in supplying Great Britain, if needs be, with a small portion of the 14,000,000 cwts. of sugar now annually consumed there. Further we could compete with Germany and France in the production of sugar, if it were not for their very high protective duties. According to Liebig, the acre of land at Magdeburg is rented at £4. 3s 6d (50 florins) and it produces 10 cwt. of beet-root sugar

at a cost of two tons of purchased coals, besides labour; and if the colonists could have sufficient or equal machinery to the beet sugar factories of the Continent, it 'would suffice to render the manufacture of beet-root sugar impossible, economically speaking.'

Sugar cultivation and manufacture on plantations that have machinery is a decided success. That sugar can be cultivated by men of small means is abundantly proven, and, as soon as there is machinery to manufacture the sugar for them, there is nothing to hinder the small planter from accomplishing the proportionate reward of cultivating five or ten acres equally and successfully with the planter of thousands.

Sugar planters have many open-hearted and social gifts. The profession is not a narrow-minded one like the English agriculturist, who objects to farming statistics, and if information is wanted for neighbours they must 'find it out.'

The sugar planters of Java, at the end of every season, cause the book-keepers to account for the season, and each cane, each bundle of 25, each load of 50 bundles, each clarifyer (600 gallons) of juice, each strike of syrup, each Baur pan full, each cooler of granulating sugar, each charge of the centrifugal, and each bag of sugar is enumerated,



An illuminated summary of the whole is drawn up and hung over the mantel-piece of the planter's house after each season. His friends can see what is done, and if there is any improvement to be done it is thoroughly discussed, and the manager and overseers have to see to it. From a fair average of one of the Java summaries, we find that the crop of cane per acre was 67,716 lbs.=30 tons 4 cwt. 2 qrs. 12 lbs., and that the cane numbered 37,780, or 1 lb. 12 ozs. each, and that the yield was 2 tons 10 cwt. of sugar, being  $8\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. upon the total cane cut. We regret not being able to give the whole affair, but we only just copied the few items to show what an average crop of cane and sugar is in Java.

There were 2000 acres of cane planted in Queensland at the beginning of 1868.

Our imports of sugar for 1867 were 3452 tons 18 cwt., or equivalent to 77 lbs. each of our 100,000 inhabitants per year. The value of our imports of sugar, raw, refined, and molasses, were entered at £108,646. That money will soon be saved to the colony, and we shall have a surplus for exportation. But the field to supply is wide even in Australia.

In 1866 the Australian colonies imported from the Mauritius sugar to the amount of £971,171 (the Mauritius export value), and probably half as much more from Java and other places, making a grand



total of one million and a half sterling we can compete for.

To conclude, the sugar industry of the world, says Professor Johnston, 'may be said to exercise a more direct and extended influence, not only over the social comfort, but over the social condition of mankind, than any other production of the vegetable kingdom. We consume it in millions of tons; we employ thousands of ships in transporting it; millions of men spend their lives in cultivating the plants from which it is extracted, and the fiscal duties imposed upon it add largely to the revenue of nearly every established Government.'

The most extensive and complete sugar plantation in Southern Queensland belongs to Mr. Raff; it is situated on the Caboolture river, about thirty miles to the north of Brisbane, and is a splendid undertaking: anyone interested in sugar growing and its manufacture would be well repaid by a visit to it. A most thorough description of this plantation appeared in the *Queenslander*, from which I quote the following paragraph as being of importance to the small sugar grower:—

"As it will soon be a question in this colony how the small farmer is to get his canes disposed of, and on what terms, I may add, by way of illustration, that, in addition to his own plantation, Mr. Raff has

just let to two Scotchmen forty-one acres of his land, which he had recently cleared, for the cultivation of the sugar cane; putting the land in order for a crop, and supplying the working cattle required in the cultivation. The conditions of the lease are as follows:—The proprietor to receive all the canes at crop time, for which he is to pay the farmers £15 an acre, provided the produce does not fall below two tons per acre. If it does, one pound per acre is to be deducted from the payment; but if the produce exceeds two tons per acre, a pound additional is to be paid by the proprietor.”

Another species of arrangement in contemplation in certain quarters is for the mill proprietor to receive half the produce for crushing the small farmers' canes and manufacturing the sugar. Another plan is the erection of central mills.

The same writer says: “The cultivation of the sugar cane and the manufacture of sugar are now one of the established branches of industry in Queensland. The colony has certainly a great future before it, and, when the present period of depression shall have been got over, as it certainly will at no distant period, cotton and sugar, for the production of which its soil and climate are so admirably adapted, will form its two great staples, and prove the mainstay of its prosperity.”



Several tons of Moreton Bay sugar were sold in Brisbane in 1868 at £36 per ton, and now, in 1869, Queensland sugars are regularly quoted at £33 and £35 per ton for the fine yellow sorts, and 30 o.p. Rum at 5s. and 6s. per gallon.

It would take too long to dwell upon the numerous thriving plantations of Moreton Bay. We will, therefore, follow the coast line northward to Maryborough, where the Mary River Sugar Company has been in working order for some time : this mill turns out a great quantity of sugar, from the coarsest 'ration' to the finest counters and crystals ; the very commonest ration sugar, being genuine, is a very *sweet meat* in comparison with the horribly sticky black mass usually imported under the name of ration sugar.

The species of cane usually grown are the Bourbon and Ribbon canes, but, owing to the kindness of Mr. Hill, of the Brisbane Gardens, some ten or twelve other sorts are being distributed amongst the planters in various parts of the colony. There are several other mills being put up on the Mary river, one by Messrs. Tooth and Cran, who have already been very successful in their system of meat preserving. The soil on the Mary river is rich, a great deal of it reclaimed scrub land.

And now, skipping a very large portion of the



coast, which is not adapted for the cultivation of *sugar* at all events, we arrive at the Mackay district, which for climate and soil is the most admirably suited of all for the cultivation of the cane, which is grown to a greater extent here than in any other district of Queensland. In describing this portion of the country, I shall quote the remarks of one of the most experienced and practical planters in the district, Mr. Spiller, prefacing these remarks with a few observations of the *Queenslander* of November, 1868.

“It will be in the recollection of many of our readers that some three years and a half ago, after a visit to the North, Mr. Walter Hill spoke in very high terms of the land situated upon the Pioneer river. His eulogiums have been verified in the fullest sense ; for even at this early stage of its history, we believe that the Mackay has more cane under cultivation than any other district in the colony. For agricultural purposes the soil seems to be really splendid. Generally it consists of a lightly timbered sandy loam of the richest description, and offering strong inducements for the settlement of large planters as well as small farmers. A resident of the place, and a considerable planter, gives us the subjoined graphic description of the district, which may be fully relied upon :—

‘The country suitable for cultivation is situated between the coast range and the sea, an area of some thirty miles. The practised eye can easily select plenty of land adapted for cane culture, consisting of beautiful open plains from one to four miles in length, nearly free from timber, and other lands lightly timbered. The agricultural lands lie on the borders of a grazing country, extending back to Nebo, of which Mackay is the port. The soil is a rich, sandy loam, very retentive of moisture, particularly after being cultivated, and, so far as proved, well adapted to the growth of the sugar-cane. The lands near the rivers and creeks are mostly undulating, whilst some of the plains, being level, require draining. The ranges in the neighbourhood have excellent soil, and seem well fitted for coffee cultivation. There are other lands in the neighbourhood, the soil of which is also very rich, but being thickly timbered is yet unoccupied. But when we see the timber clearing going on in the Brisbane and Maryborough districts, I think the advantages we derive from our tropical climate ripening our cane (as it does the Bourbon) in twelve months, the heaviest timbered land is worthy of attention. The lands above-mentioned are, I should say, on an average of fifty feet above the sea.

‘The country is well watered with running creeks,



lagoons, and swamps, consequently the grasses are very fine ; they consist of barley and kangaroo grass, wild oats, and an endless variety of herbs, which both horses and cattle are very fond of. The fattening qualities are best proved by the working bullocks that but lately have crossed the arid burnt-up plains over the range, the sudden change in their condition proving that they have all they want here. The timber is mixed. Gum, Moreton Bay ash, Leichardt, bloodwood, tea-tree, mahogany, and cedar. In the ranges there is a still greater variety, amongst which is stringy bark. The rivers and creeks are fringed with scrubs, containing rattan, innumerable vines, white wood, plum, cherry, and white cedar, and, above all, clusters of beautiful palm-trees, giving the country all the appearance of a tropical and sugar growing district. We are generally well supplied with rain, having either a day's rain or a thunder-storm about every six weeks or two months. The wet season we have had pretty regular the last three years, setting in about Christmas and lasting from twenty to thirty days. The plough is not stopped more than a couple of days after our heaviest rains are over. The climate is healthy ; it is pretty hot in the summer months, when we have the advantage of the trade winds, so that the heat is not felt so much as is generally supposed. I have lived there



for the past three and a half years, and the only doctor that has retired did so unfortunately, to put an end to his own existence. There is no danger of our own present jolly little doctor following suit, he having a turn for exploring, and being fond of botanizing; I am sure he leads a very comfortable life. May it be a long one. Well, besides the doctor, our town boasts of a Roman Catholic priest, a Church of England minister, five hotels, four stores, &c. &c., and a considerable and increasing population; we also have a newspaper.

‘For a time the cultivation was confined chiefly to the growth of maize, vegetables, and fruits such as the local demand required, until about eighteen months ago, when sugar planting was commenced in the district with a spirit which the returns from Messrs. Davidson and Co.’s mill will prove by-and-bye. I had the pleasure of seeing some ten to twelve tons of manufactured sugar there early in October, samples of which I got from Mr. Davidson. I may also mention that with a small wooden mill I was enabled to crush canes in November, 1867, the juice of which stood at 11 by Baume’s saccharometer; then again, in February, after the wet season, I crushed more from the same ground, which stood at 10. These canes were two years old, which may account for the slight injury caused by the rain.

‘To convey a still better idea of the place I will give you the list of plantations, with the area of land now under sugar:—

	ACRES.
Alexandra . . . .	230
Pleystowe . . . .	130
Branscombe . . . .	50
Dunbleton . . . .	40
Pioneer . . . .	40
Balnagowan . . . .	30
Plantations not yet named .	40

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Making a total of . . . 560

‘The greater portion of which will be ready for crushing within twelve months, and the whole of it within fifteen months.

‘At the present time there is only one mill in the district, that on the Alexandra plantation. Messrs. Hewitt and Co. expect theirs to be landed in January next, and I hear that mill No. 3 is soon to be erected, and so situated in the midst of the country lands and small farms, as to encourage many farmers to enter on this new enterprise.

‘The work of these plantations is carried on with mixed labour of Europeans and Polynesians, the latter in every instance working well. To this fact I would earnestly draw the especial attention of some

of the numerous letter writers on 'the slavery question.' I have had twenty of these Polynesians since May, 1867. In the first onset I made it my study to learn their language, so that I could make them understand me; and I began putting them to their work. It required all the patience I could muster at first, but they gradually got acquainted with the use of different tools, before unknown to them, and now I am reaping the benefit, and proud to see every morning turning out for the field four good ploughmen with their six bullocks each and drivers; others with their horse teams that can mark out a drill as straight as I can. Not only do they do their work well, but they are contented. I do not put them on rations; they get all they require of beef, sweet potatoes, yams, corn meal, green corn, arrow-root, sugar, molasses, milk, and one plug of tobacco per week. Tea they do not much care about; when they want tea they are not afraid to ask for it. I find a great advantage in being able to talk with them, and I think it has helped to make them fond of me. They also like this country very much, and often ask me to keep them and get their wives over, and let them have a bit of land. They are far from being so ignorant as is often supposed; they know well when their term of agreement expires, but they would much prefer having their wives over here to



returning to their native island; and in this I will certainly assist them if the Government will allow me to do so.

‘The port of this district is Mackay, situated upon the Pioneer river, which is navigable for six miles. A considerable number of small craft is employed taking loading to and from the township.’ ”

With regard to No. 3 mill, before mentioned, the *Mackay Mercury* says: “We think that if the rumoured story of a public company starting here with sugar machinery, turns out to be an accomplished fact, there will then be a greater impetus given to the cultivation of sugar-cane. The man with ten acres of cane will work them with almost an equal proportionate per centage of profit as the proprietor of a plantation with a mill at work. At a very low calculation, one and a half tons of sugar can be realised from one acre of land, provided due care is bestowed upon the cane when it is growing. At the rate per ton for Queensland sugars, this would fetch £45 to £50, and after paying mill expenses for crushing, freight, and commission, would give, at the least, a return of £35 for every acre cultivated. There is not the slightest doubt but that this district is fast approaching to the position occupied by places where sugar is the main source of local wealth and importance.”

The *Mercury*, of September, 1868, adds : “ During the past week about thirty tons of sugar have been manufactured at the Alexandra Mill, three tons of which have been bagged ready for export. The works are now kept going night and day. The before-mentioned number of tons of sugar will be about the weekly average for the next two months. On several of the southern plantations a good brown sugar is manufactured, which sells readily at from £30 to £35 per ton, but by the improved machinery and centrifugal appliances of Messrs. Davidson and Co.’s mill, the article is turned out in a superior condition, and will undoubtedly command a higher price than that hitherto ruling for Queensland sugars.” The proprietors of the above mill have proved that two tons of sugar and fifty-six gallons of rum can be safely reckoned on from an acre of land, in this district, properly planted and cultivated. At the very commencement, one ton of good and dry sugar to the acre was manufactured from old and woody canes, and by reboiling the molasses, one and three-quarter tons could have been made ; but owing to the price of rum at this time, it paid better to distil it. Though there is more to be made by growing cane than almost any other crop, the obstacle to the small grower has been in the supply of machinery. The men who can grow five or ten



acres of cane cannot afford to get the requisite machinery, nor would it answer to erect machinery for such a plot ; but it undoubtedly would pay were several contiguous growers to combine ; and this system is already being carried out in the southern districts. Supposing a man erects machinery capable of making ten tons of sugar per week : this quantity per week expresses the consumption of four acres, at two and a half tons per acre. The proper months for sugar making are from the end of August to the middle of January, about eighteen or twenty weeks, which, at the rate of four acres a week, shows seventy or eighty acres of land to be sufficient to employ machinery costing about £2000. This may be a basis for some to calculate from, whose wants may be larger or smaller.

But, apart from the regular plantations, there is a large field open to enterprising farmers (possessing a few hundreds) in these rich agricultural districts ; and to *them*, and those of smaller means still, the Homestead clause in the new Land Act particularly applies. Everything that has been tried in the Mackay District, which has been justly styled, “the Garden of Queensland,” has grown to perfection : sugar cane, maize, arrowroot, cassava, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, seem to take to the district as their natural soil and climate. English vegetables



come to perfection just as well as they do in England :—potatoes, turnips, carrots, spinach, cabbages, lettuce, peas, &c. &c. All these do best on the rich lands along the banks of the river and creeks, and without any manure. This perfection of growth is not the exception, but every year they have been grown with equal success, some of them all through the year, but naturally the winter season is best for English vegetables, and March and April the very best times for sowing.

Bananas, pine apples, melons, oranges, lemons, shaddocks, guavas, grapes, custard apples, peaches, all thrive well and ripen their fruit, besides the Papaw apple, and some other fruits from the South Sea Islands.

Indigo, tobacco, and coffee grow most luxuriantly, the latter has not been planted long enough to have borne fruit. All sorts of spices thrive and grow, and flowers do remarkably well. English roses of every sort; jessamines, honeysuckle, retain their full amount of scent (which is seldom the case in other hot countries); dahlias, annuals of every description, both from colonial and home-grown seed; camelias, gardenias, all sorts of flowering creepers; the magnificent bougainvillia; also passion fruit, grenadilla, &c., in short, one might go on with an almost inexhaustible quantity. The reason of my having been

thus particular in specifying the various minor products is, because I am continually asked, "Will this grow?" "Does that grow?" Suffice it to say, that everything that has been tried has proved *more* than a success, where merely ordinary attention has been shown.

Maize generally finds a ready sale, either in Mackay, or in some of the towns to the north or south of it, the carriers being amongst the chief purchasers. It sells from 3s 6d to 5s 6d, and even, occasionally, 6s per bushel. Several sorts are grown. The ordinary yellow maize, with proper management, will give a return of forty bushels to the acre, and three crops of this "ninety-day corn" *can* be grown in one year, under the most favourable conditions, thus, giving a quick return, and "cleaning" the ground, it is usually the first crop planted. English potatoes sell at from £9 to £10 per ton.

But, besides the small farmer being able to grow canes to supply the mills; and potatoes, corn, etc. for the various markets and stations, there are various other products which would prove most remunerative were they managed properly, for, in a climate like Queensland, every agriculturist should grow something for exportation, and not confine himself solely to supplying the wants of the community in which he lives. For instance, what I

should like to draw particular attention to, is the growth and manufacture of tobacco and cigars; opium; the preserving of fruits; the manufacture of the china grass fibre, also of maizena. All of these articles, and many others, finding a ready market in different parts of the world: and be careful that whatever is grown and manufactured is of the very best description. More harm is done to a young colony than some imagine, by supplying the market with a sample not carefully proved; and I know that where, in one or two cases, the imported article has been preferred by the public, it was because the home-grown one had been pronounced excellent by personal friends, whereas, had it been submitted to a disinterested judge, he would have pronounced it only middling.

The want of space forbids more than a cursory glance at either the cultivation or manufacture of any of these plants.

Tobacco of various sorts thrives well in this district, and is not much subject to attacks of the grub, which usually is a great pest. Its cultivation is most simple, the average amount of leaf to the acre is 15 cwt. If this is properly got up, it will bring one shilling per pound in Sydney, so that even without any manufacturing, but simply selling the leaf, it would bring a handsome profit.



The quantity of various fruits is increasing so rapidly that they will soon get out of all proportion to the quantity consumed ; it would therefore be well to think of some way of preserving them. With the exception of bananas and pines, our exports of fruit amount to very little, while even with them the market is confined to the neighbouring colonies.

Tomatoes, both red and yellow of every size and shape, grow like weeds ; this fruit will not carry when ripe, and unless ripe few can use it ; and I believe that a good business could be done in the colony with preserved tomatoes, and tomato catsup, more particularly amongst the stations, as a substitute for the expensive and often adulterated pickles, while the demand outside the colony and amongst shipping would be unlimited.

In America, where the growth of the tomato plant is difficult, and where its early vigour has to be forced, the summer being too short to bring the fruit to maturity, the quantity grown, preserved, and exported is enormous : this fruit is well known to possess extraordinary value as a dietetic and anti-scorbutic.

These preserved tomatoes from America are sold to the British public at 1s per lb., at which price it would pay us well to compete with them. I think it as well to describe the *preservation*, as it applies

equally well to bananas, pineapples, and other fruits. The plan is simple. The fruit is gathered when just turning ripe, with the first blush of colour, the skin is pared off, and the fruit put in a porcelain-lined preserving-pan, with a pound of sugar to about ten tomatoes; the pan is put on a very slow fire. When the whole is thoroughly heated throughout, the fruit, is lifted with a wooden spoon, and placed in ordinary 1 lb., 2 lb., or larger tin preserve cans, and the syrup is poured in until all cavities are filled up, a circular piece of tin having an air-hole in the centre is then soldered on the opening in the can, a drop of solder closes the air-hole, and the fruit is in a keeping state for years; a neat label only is further necessary to make it a highly marketable article.

Then look at the China grass plant, "*Urtica Nivea*," wherever it has been grown in Queensland it has become a perfect nuisance, spreading itself by both suckers and seeds all over the ground, and yet the market value of the raw material of this seed has for some years past maintained itself in the English market at the very high rate of about £80 per ton, which price it is supposed cannot be much lessened for years to come. The China grass is called in Chinese "*Chû*," or "*Tchou-ma*," in Japan "*Karas*," Malay "*Ramee*," Assam "*Rheea*."

*The Indo-Chinese method of preparing the Rheea*



*fibre.* The rhea is fit for cutting when the stems become of a brown colour for about six inches upwards from the root.

*To strip off the bark and fibre.*—The operator holds the stalk in both hands nearly in the middle, and pressing the forefinger and thumb of both hands firmly, gives it a peculiar twist, the inner pith is broken, and then, passing the fingers of his right and left hand alternately towards each end, the bark and fibre is completely separated from the stalk in two strands.

*Making up into bundles.*—The strands of bark and fibre are then made up into bundles of convenient size, tied at the smaller end with a shred of fibre, and put into clean water for a few hours, which probably deprives the plant of its tannin or colouring matter, the water becoming quite red in a short time.

*Cleaning process.*—The cleaning process is as follows:—The bundles are put on a hook fastened in a post by means of the tie at the smaller end, at a convenient height for the operator, who takes each strand of the larger end separately in his left hand, passes the thumb of his right hand quickly along the inner side, by which operation the outer bark is completely separated from the fibre, and the riband of fibre is then thoroughly cleaned by two or three scrapings with a small knife: this completes the



operation with some loss ; however, say one-fifth, and if quickly dried in the sun, it might at once be made up for exportation, but the appearance of the fibre is much improved by exposure (immediately after cleaning) on the grass to a night's heavy dew in September or October, or a shower of rain during the rainy season. After drying, the colour improves, and there is no risk of mildew on the voyage homewards. From its great value, if any other cheaper method of separating the fibre could be discovered, it would undersell all other fibres. In four months it attains the height of eight and ten feet, when it shoots flowers and can be cut. The Malays merely steep the shoots in water for ten days, peel off the bark and dry it. Why it is called "Grass" it would be hard to guess. The plant is a shrub, the leaves of a silvery-white underneath.

The manufacture of maizena is most profitable in other countries ; why not here ? Bacon also finds a ready sale : it would doubtless pay well to carry on the breeding of pigs in connection with the manufacture of that article, fattening them upon the refuse corn.

Indigo would prove a most paying crop ; it grows well in the colony, and first-rate samples have been manufactured.

Cotton, no doubt, is of sufficient importance to

secure a chapter entirely to itself, but I must here confine myself to a few remarks concerning it, and refer those interested to a useful little pamphlet, "The Cotton Plant in Queensland," published in Brisbane, price 6*d.* The home market for this article fluctuates greatly, the last quotations being high. "Uplands," or woolly-seeded, grown in the tropics fetched 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* per lb. in the Manchester market; this was in February, 1869.

Sea-island from Townsville (also in the north) fetched 2*s.* 3*d.* The great cotton growing district, however, is Ipswich, where it seems to be well cultivated and brought to great perfection. At present in the north the lands are devoted to sugar. I believe it is an established fact in older countries that old and worn sugar and coffee plantations will be maiden soil to cotton.

The English cotton spinners complain of two faults in Queensland cotton: first it is often ginned by the "saw gin," which cuts the staple, and, to use their expression, the cotton is "ginned to death" (all the best descriptions of gins are now to be purchased in the colony); secondly, they complain that the cotton is frequently very mixed, not only good, middling, and bad are packed together, but different *varieties* of the plant are placed in the same bale.

There has been great difficulty in procuring really pure seed of the various cottons.

To meet this difficulty I cannot do better than quote some remarks under the heading of "Improvement of Cotton by purity of Seed," &c., written by Major Trevor Clarke, a highly accomplished botanist, who has made it his especial object for many years to promote an improved growth of cotton by hybridisation. The pamphlet was issued by the "Cotton Supply Association of Manchester."

"Experimental farms at the expense of the Government are nothing new; for a century or two they have been carried on in spite of the perversity of man as well as that of the elements, and have borne their fruit." (This is alluding to the West Indies.) "My modification, however, would be this: *Let such establishments be entirely devoted to seed farming*, the sole effort being restricted to the production of pure seed in the country where it is destined to be grown in future. In this country (England) no grower of seed, either for agricultural or gardening purposes, would now obtain a sale for his produce were he to supply his customers with mixed or inferior seeds. In the establishments of such persons the master himself goes through his crops several times a year for the purpose of destroying every plant which proves inferior or untrue to



sort. This weeding process is technically and expressively called "rogueing" the crop, and is absolutely necessary to ensure purity and high quality. At the same time improvement by special selection is carried on; single plants showing high qualities are picked out for propagation, and the produce of these submitted even more rigidly to the same treatment."

The return of cotton to the acre is from one bale (300 lbs.) to two bales and even two and a half. The amount of the Government bonus granted is £5 (in land orders) for every bale (of 300 lbs.) of clean cotton, either woolly seed or Sea-island. It is much to be hoped that this bonus law will be extended for some years. The pamphlet, entitled, "The Cotton Plant in Queensland," says: "It is a crop which pays the cottager with his one or two acres, and it pays the capitalist with three hundred acres. Invariably the cottager raises the heaviest crop per acre. His field being small, he works it himself, and his family picks the cotton, which is always done better than by hired labour. A piece of light sandy soil not far from Ipswich has yielded to its tenant for the last three years an average crop of two bales to the acre, and the produce of one acre of similar soil has been sold in Ipswich last season for £49. 15s.

"Implements of the best description" (in fact

every description of agricultural implements can be obtained in Queensland, just as good and reasonable as those made in England, and much more suitable to the country) “ can be procured in Ipswich, where the blacksmiths have imitated the imported American implements, and turned out a more substantial article. Every facility is given to small growers by gin owners, who gin and pack their cotton at a reasonable rate. The grower of two bales can have his cotton sent home under advance, on the same terms as the planter of one hundred bales. He can get cash advanced on cotton shipped, within a small limit of its value, in the home market; so with this and the government bonus of £5 per bale, he will *have cash in hand to extend his operations.*”\*

And now to answer a few questions which are asked, and very naturally so, by friends at home; and here let me remark, that it would simplify matters exceedingly if those interested in Queensland would put their questions with regard to some particular *district*, wherever their friends may be, and failing that, to mention *Queensland*, at all events; not, “do you do this in *Australia*?” The whole continent is so enormous, that, excepting by old colonists, little more is known of the other

\* The manufacture of cotton and woollen cloth is attracting great attention in the Colony; and silk-culture is being proceeded with on a large scale by a French gentleman.



colonies, situated as they are, hundreds of miles to the south, than is known at home. Queenslanders have quite enough to do to think of their own colony, possessing, as she does, an area nearly double the size of Canada. The question is often asked, "How do you live on plantations?" Without producing an exact bill of fare, the answer is easy: plantations are necessarily near the coast: the northern ones are all close to steam communication, boats calling every week or ten days; townships are within a few miles. Well, where many hands are employed, it pays better to buy a few beasts, now and then, from a neighbouring station (they can be got, according to quality, at £3, £4, £5), and kill one's own beef. On a small place the butcher will supply you with beef, mutton, &c. at the respective prices of 2*d*, 3*d* and 4*d* per lb. Living is decidedly cheap; a few groceries have to be purchased; but most of one's daily wants are produced on the place—pigs, poultry, sugar, molasses, fruits, vegetables; bread made partly from maize meal is delicious; this maize is eaten in fifty different ways.

Arrowroot is manufactured and consumed on all the plantations. Cows can be had for nothing; the station owners sending young ones down, which are broken in and returned at the end of the year or so, the "breaker" having, of course, the benefit of the milk. Atmospheric churns are a great success in



the colony. These new inventions, including the tube well, etc., find their way to the colony two or three months after their appearance in England.

Delicious fish swarm in the rivers, and it only requires a haul of a small seine net to supply the house and "islanders" for a week. There is *everything*, and to spare. The old joke, concerning "damper, mutton and tea" may now fairly be dropped.

A good house, consisting of four rooms, built of sawn timber, shingled, with a wide verandah, can be put up at a cost of under £200. This timber is sent ready sawn from Maryborough, the great timber district, it costs at the mills there about 10s per 100 feet of pine; 15s ditto of hard wood.

If you cannot manage to keep working bullocks, and on a small place it would be out of the question, you can get your land broken up and harrowed by your neighbour's cattle at a cost of about £2. 10s per acre, and as it is done deeply and well for this, you can always manage with your own horses afterwards.

Substantial wooden fencing can be put up at from 5s to 7s per rod. A paddock containing water should be fenced off for horses, cows, &c.

Planters, whose land stretches to the river bank, usually have boats; and delightful picnics and excursions can be made to the adjoining bays and

islands, and not the least pleasant part is the return home, during one of those glorious nights which are the rule in Queensland ; and with, perhaps, a full cargo of coral, oysters, &c., in your boat.

I once spent a week in Moreton Bay, in company with a friend, and two blackfellows ; one should not go without a Brisbane Black or two, as they know the bay well. Our boat contained a tent, a bit of mosquito net, provisions, water keg, seine-net, guns, ammunition, blankets, hooks and lines, &c. We came back at the end of the week, having had a *perfect surfeit* of sport of all kinds. We shot waterfowl till we ran short of ammunition ; we hauled in quantities of fish and curiosities with our seine ; caught huge “ snapper ” with our hooks and lines ; also cod, by ascending the Albert river ; the Blacks speared a “ dugong,” several feet long : this strange fish, or sea cow, they found grazing on the weed in a shallow part of the bay. The “ chase ” was most exciting, as the fish can tow an ordinary sized boat along at a great pace ; he was stopped by a lucky shot. The flesh is good and the oil very valuable. We brought back a turtle weighing nearly 4 cwt. ; some dried fish and handsome shells.

Boats are built in Brisbane for £1 per foot, these are good substantial sea boats.

I will bring this long chapter to a close with

a few remarks about the "hunting," and the horses.

A good deal of hunting takes place about the coast towns. There is a club at Rockhampton called the "Criterion Hunt Club."

A party of ten, or so, start before daylight for some neighbouring station where game is plentiful: one day, with ten good dogs, they managed to kill seven kangaroos and two emus, without an accident to man, horse or dog; the running was splendid, and the hounds behaved in first-rate style, never missing a chance, "bailing up," and pulling down the "old men" with a certainty that spoke well for their breed and staunchness. The emu hunts were exciting in the extreme, and the galloping powers of the nags were tested to the utmost. The kangaroo hunting of Australia almost matches with fox hunting in England.

Pigs, which have run wild, also afford good sport in some parts of the colony.

*Horses*—are plentiful, cheap, and good. Nearly every station, however, has one, or more, "buck-jumpers," which are seldom ridden, and which one would think would be better shot. It is true that they are often the best journey horses; but it is no pleasure to commence a very hot, long day, with the most violent exercise that one can possibly undergo:



it generally "takes it out" of the horse too. Buck-jumpers can never be depended upon. A bad one will throw his saddle clear over his head and forelegs without breaking or in any way injuring the girths : in fact he puts himself into attitudes that would be fortunes in themselves could they be exhibited at a home circus. Fancy plaiting a horse's tail into his crupper, and *then* some of them will buck their saddle off : some horses will cast every sort of harness made, and which has been put on with every dodge and expedient thought of.

Queensland horses perform wonderful journeys on poor food, for though the grass is good, it is not much sustenance for 40 or 50 miles under a blazing sun, and they seldom get a feed of corn. There are some very hard riders in the colony apart from stock-riders : I know one man who rides the same horse 80 miles a day for three consecutive days, and then leaves him for another.

It is a treat to see a good rough rider on a buck-jumper : getting into his saddle is one of the hardest parts of the process, and sometimes horses have to be "bailed up" to get the saddle on : however having gained his seat by a nimble spring, I have seen a man (a Sydney native) so much at his ease, that while the horse has been "bucking a hurricane," to use a colonial expression, the rider has been cutting

up his tobacco and filling his pipe, while several feet in the air, nothing in front of him excepting a small lock of the animal's mane (the head being between its legs), and very little behind him, the stern being down : the horse either giving a turn in the air, or going forward every buck. Another man used to teach his horse (which was free from vice) to gallop full speed up to the verandah of a house, and when almost against it, the animal would stop in his stride (or prop), when the rider vaulted lightly over his head on to the verandah.

A buckjumper will sometimes go quietly for weeks—you may be out Kangarooing ; the dogs take after one, and it promises to be a good course ; you touch up your animal with the spurs, and you touch him him up with a vengeance, for lo ! up he goes into the air, and bucks for about ten minutes : if there is anything to try your temper it is this, knowing as you do that this worthless brute may be the cause of your dogs being lost or killed.

I was out once with a friend making a "marked tree line," *i.e.* barking certain trees on both sides with tomahawks, when my companion's young mare took fright at something, and bolted beyond all control of her rider : she was going at a frantic pace straight into heavy timber, where both must have been smashed to a jelly, when I saw my friend lift



his arm, strike, and man and horse disappeared on the ground in the long grass: he had buried his tomahawk in the brute's brain, right through the head stall: he was much shaken, but saved his own life, and not 30 seconds too soon.

To quote the Rockhampton horse-market of December, 1868: Heavy draught, £18 to £22.; light harness, £12 to £16.; good condition journey horses, £14 to £16.; for station work, £9 to £12.; roadsters, £7 to £10.; hacks, £5 to £8.; inferior, £3 to £5.

*South Sea Island labour.*

The question will naturally be asked, where is all the labour to work the plantations? the answer is South Sea Islanders.

These labourers have been imported into Queensland since 1863, with the approval of the Colonial Government. They come from the "Sandwich Islands," from the islands of "Tonga," "Lifu," "Mare," &c. They are a fine powerful race of men, and though some of them are cannibals in their own islands, this does not in the least affect their character in the colony, the totally uncivilized ones being the most eagerly sought for. They are generally rather emaciated when first landed, owing to the sea voyage, but soon recover both health and spirits. They work well on some stations, and all plantations



mostly, doing much better on the latter, owing to the life and food being more suited to their natural tastes and habits. They cannot bear to be separated, and on stations they have to be sent out in different directions, shepherding sheep, &c. : probably the only vegetable they get is rice.

Their work on plantations consists in planting canes, "trashing," weeding, sowing and picking corn, shelling it; sowing and picking cotton, &c.; but they learn everything they are shown, such as splitting timber, milking the cows. They get as much corn, rice, molasses, yams, potatoes, bananas, and other fruits and vegetables as they like, besides fish when near a river: butchers' meat they care little about, merely eating a small bit which they prefer to burn first to a cinder. They wear a piece of calico or soft bark round their loins; some have rings of bone through their ears and nose, and ornaments in their hair, which is crisp like a negro's. I have often seen whole gangs picking corn, laughing and singing all the time; a trifling incident will amuse them immensely; they generally have a good humoured look about them. They are very expert at spearing game and fish.

The planters treat them kindly, as they should be treated, and they become very much attached to their masters, manifesting genuine sorrow if he goes

away. Their term of service lasts for three years, when they are sent back to their country. Their passage money costs £6 a head, more or less, according to the place they are landed at. Their wages are £6 a year, to those who understand the value of money ; but to those who do not, an equivalent is given in the shape of clothes, implements, and whatever else they choose to ask for, and it is curious to see what they *do* ask for sometimes—axes, hoes, guns, puppy dogs, jews' harps, and a most miscellaneous assortment.

Every care is taken by the emigration agents that proper attention is paid to the health and comfort of the immigrants. Efforts were made by certain platform orators of Brisbane to prove that an attempt was being made to introduce a system of slavery : however, they got the worst of the argument and “ shut up ” for the time, opening out however at every fresh arrival of Islanders.

Employing Islanders myself I can speak from experience in this matter also, and it may be taken as a pretty good proof that there is no suspicion of slavery amongst those cases within my experience, when I state that many of those taken back to their islands at the end of their time of service have returned in the same vessel ; in fact, merely went ashore during the period of the vessel's stay, leaving



their goods with their friends, and declaring they would work for another three years for more things. Hitherto, none of their women have been brought over, but it is to be hoped that they will come before long. There are some who persist in calling it slavery, in spite of every evidence to the contrary; but without in any way noticing these, the following letter will satisfy any clear-headed and enlightened man of the rights of the system. It is written by a gentleman, who, apart from his profession, is most strict and severe in matters referring particularly to emigrants, to the gentleman acting as agent to the South Sea Islanders:—

*“ Police Office, Bowen,  
December 20th, 1867.*

“ SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. requesting that I will inform you of the result of my inspection of the schooner *Spunkie*, which arrived here on the 8th instant, with 129 South Sea Islanders.

“ I have much satisfaction in stating, in answer to your questions—

“ 1st. That I am convinced that the Islanders came of their own accord; that all those with whom, by means of interpreters, I was able to converse, thoroughly understood their agreements, and that the agreements entered into by them with their



masters were strictly in accordance with the representations you made to them when they left their islands.

“2nd. I saw nothing to lead me to suppose that the Islanders had suffered from any ill-treatment whilst they were on board the schooner; on the contrary, the cleanly state of the vessel, the healthy appearance of the men, the confidence and trust they seemed to have in you, and the fact that no complaint of any kind was made to me, assured me that they had been well taken care of during the voyage.

“3rd. The accommodation afforded by the vessel was ample for the number of men you brought; *far better* than in *any* immigration vessel I have inspected.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

“PHILIP PINNOCK,

“Police Magistrate.

“John Crossley, Esq., Schooner Spunkie.”

Some farmers have complained that the Islanders are either unable or unwilling to perform the quantity of work expected from them, and that they are unfitted to work as labourers. These men most certainly have their own inexperience and want of management to blame to a very great extent for their failure. It would be absurd to expect that a

native of one of the South Sea islands, a savage, who very probably had never before conceived the idea that he would be required to labour regularly, day by day, for his living, should all at once exhibit the industry and obedience expected from an English labourer ; yet, many have expressed disappointment that such has not been the case. There is no doubt that, to people who have not the time or patience required to teach South Sea Islanders, hired at a very cheap rate, to perform their work with care and diligence, the European labourer would, in the long run, be found much cheaper. Besides, the strongest advocates of the introduction of Polynesian labour have never argued that it is suited to arduous tasks, requiring the exercise of great physical strength. Hence it is that they are enabled to bear out the assertion that the greater number of South Sea Islanders there are employed in the colony, the greater will be the demand for European labourers of a superior class, and the greater necessity therefore for encouraging a large stream of immigration.

With regard to European labour, I may mention that agricultural labourers are in greater demand than skilled artizans, the latter branch having been overdone. Ploughmen get from £25 to £30, and even £40 a year, according to their qualities, and



are found in all rations. They can easily save the greater part of this if they are steady men ; and I have known many buy land for themselves. Married couples get £60 a year and double rations, children over twelve may be hired with their parents at good wages.\* A good hut being always found for all classes. I advise every man to remain with a good master when he gets one : he will save more and do better for himself in every way, than by rushing off, as many do, either because they fancy that their wages ought to be raised, or because they hear of a diggings having "broken out." Some men do well by going about the country and taking contracts for fencing, erecting stockyards, splitting slabs, putting up "humpies," digging wells, &c., but these are men who have gained colonial experience: A "new chum" has to learn all this, and on being hired must be contented to *commence* on from £25 to £30 a year and his rations. A very *rough* ploughman need not despair of work, for there are plenty of small farmers who would engage such a man, for he could make himself generally useful, at draining, gardening, cutting timber, clearing scrub, and when a piece of ground required working could take his week or so at the plough and harrow.

\* The intending emigrant should, *without fail*, provide himself with "Pugh's Queensland Almanac," to be procured at the news rooms of Messrs. Gordon and Gotch, High Holborn, London.



There is a great demand in the colony for female domestic servants of good character ; their wages vary from eight to twelve shillings a week, according to locality. Barmaids in some of the hotels in the larger towns get as high as fifteen shillings a week—in all cases board and lodging is included. The man of education, possessing no capital, and incapable of manual labour, should never emigrate. The supply of clerks far exceeds the demand in the colony.

Let the amount of capital be even only two or three hundred pounds ! much more can be done with it in Queensland than at home ; but, whatever the amount is, beware of investing *one farthing*, or “going in” with anybody, until you have thoroughly gained colonial experience.

And be it remembered, in conclusion, that there is an unlimited supply of the very best coast country left to choose from : that whenever the telegraph from the Gulf of Carpentaria is joined to the Indo-Anglian line by way of Java, or that steam communication is carried on *via* “Torres Straits,” Northern Queensland will be in direct communication with England, and will be able to receive and transmit news *before* the other colonies. Let no one therefore be afraid of “going north.” Settlers make a colony, civilization follows them as a matter of course.

There are various routes to reach Queensland by,

the long sea route being the best in every way for a man of limited means, or going out for the first time.

The Black-ball ships proceed direct. A saloon ticket in one of these, including wine bill, cost me £60 ; and I was landed at Brisbane, in Moreton Bay, in 85 days from Plymouth Sound.

The amount of *outfit* has always been a difficult matter for the intending emigrant to decide ; and they are frequently informed that various articles must be taken by the *gross*. All this is a great mistake ; there is sure to be more than one emigrant girl on board who will wash your things for a trifling cost. *Everything* in the shape of clothes can be procured just as cheaply and as good in the colony as at home ; yet a well made suit or two of *fine* tweed, and a dress suit, would come in handy on first arriving.

Never bring an English saddle.

A breach-loading gun, strong enough to carry ball, and a large supply of cartridge *cases*, ready capped, will be found invaluable.

Every sort of revolver can be purchased in Brisbane for very nearly the same price as at home ; so can rifles, but they are ' not wanted.'

As a rule, the new chum brings an enormous "swag" into the country ; he lands at Brisbane,



wishes to proceed north or inland, and finds he must either *store* the bulk of his property at a large cost, or dispose of it at a ruinous price.

And one word to friends at home wishing to send presents to *their* friends in the colony. It is true that the very fact of receiving a box from home engenders the same happy feelings in the man, that the advent of a hamper at school did in the boy, but be sure that the box contains really useful things, for it will be opened at Brisbane, and an "ad valorem" duty charged on its contents. Printed books, garden seeds, and a few other things are exempt from duty; any new invention which can be usefully applied would be most acceptable, but should be despatched without delay: so also with new books.

I may mention that silk shirts of the very best quality, and made of non-fading colours, for they will be much exposed to the sun, would be most highly prized. So would also the smallest but most powerful opera glasses, which would go in a leather case on the belt. And to a planter, a box of Sutton's vegetable and flower seeds may *always* be added. But never send or take canteens, holsters, gaiters, cooking apparatus, tins for boiling water with spirits, or any of such useless trash, which articles are known in the old country by the expressive word "fads."



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DIGGINGS.—GYMPIE CREEK.

THE “Gympie Creek” diggings, situated on and about the Mary river, and roughly speaking, about 100 miles from Brisbane, and fifty from Maryborough, may be looked upon as the richest gold field that up to this time has been discovered in the colony, and “breaking out” as they did during a period of most severe commercial depression, these diggings may be said to have almost entirely saved Brisbane from utter insolvency; but for their discovery many of its business men would have gone into the Insolvency Court, whereas they have now branch stores on the diggings doing a thriving trade.

At the commencement of 1868, and when these diggings were some four months old, I visited them in company with some friends—there were then from 9000 to 10,000 men on them. The following remarks are from a journal I kept at the time. “We started from the interior of the Burnett district, during one of the hottest and driest summers

that had been known there: our entire journey therefore was a very hot and a very dusty one, but taking into consideration the dryness of the season, we found the country both well grassed and watered. Sometimes our track took us over barren ridges growing stunted ironbark trees, and covered with stones, with here and there pieces of quartz cropping up; sometimes through tracts growing silver-leaved ironbark and stunted bloodwood, sure sign of good country, whilst the "flats" looked amazingly green in contrast with the surrounding country; here the grass and the common fern grew luxuriantly, reminding one of a park in the old country, until, looking up, one sees the beautifully green and shady swamp mahogany and apple trees, when any 'distant' dreams are quickly dispelled. We also passed through scrubs growing gigantic pine trees. The whole of the road from beginning to end was several inches deep in white dust as fine as flour, which obliged us to carefully wash our eyes every evening for fear of "sandy blight." Approaching nearer to the diggings we found more bare ridges, growing gums and ironbarks of a great height and as straight as arrows. Crossing the Mary river, which we found at this point to be a beautiful running stream, whose banks were fringed by luxuriant 'vine'-scrubs, we came upon

the first sign of *digging* : this was a hole, resembling a grave, sunk in a gully : the earth thrown out was yellow, but the hole had been abandoned, evidently proving in miner's slang a "duffer." All the gullies also within ten miles of the diggings proper, showed signs of having been tested : often hundreds of feet below us a heap of reddish earth would mark the spot, like a distant rabbit burrow. On arriving within some four miles of the diggings we heard that we were in the neighbourhood of a new "rush" ! It being our first visit to diggings we all wondered whether diggers actually ran on these occasions ; for we could hardly fancy that were even *gold* the object in view it would be sufficient to make a man run up and down stony gullies, thermometer standing at 120, carrying pick and shovel. We however met parties of men walking along *off* the track, as though nothing unusual had occurred ; but subsequent experience showed us that this apathy was only manifest after men had been constantly disappointed by false rumours, and that when the report was verified they ran as hard as they could, often in their hurry leaving behind blankets, "billies," picks, and everything, and continuing day and night till the golden spot was reached.

We met a few disappointed diggers (returning) but they are always to be found on the best dig-



gings. After quitting some sandy ranges we came down on to a flat, gullies from other ranges on our left running into it, and thus running out quite shallow. It was at the tail of one of these gullies that we first saw diggers working in true style: about four "claims" were marked out by means of stakes driven in at the four corners of each claim. Two men were resting in the first hole we looked at, which was only two feet deep: all the other holes in the gulley were in the same state with the exception of one, but this one, at the very tail of the gulley, was down twelve or fourteen feet, and a crowd of diggers were round its mouth; these were waiting for the owners to "bottom," *i.e.* reach the description of earth which contains the gold, and we were afterwards told that old diggers from the other colonies frequently made mistakes on these diggings, going right through the bottom, for the auriferous soil differs altogether on different diggings. In this case some of the earth was carried off in a sack to the nearest water-hole and washed, but was found only to contain "the colour," and after trying other claims with the same result, this gulley was abandoned.

From this spot to the township we passed numerous deserted claims, looking like grave-yards, with here and there small water-holes the colour and

consistency of pea-soup, rendered so by the quantities of dirt that had been washed in them, drays were encamped in all directions, with numerous tents, many of the latter showing their New Zealand origin, by bearing the name "Hokitiki Hokitiki" upon them, women and children cooking; the only men we saw here were stragglers in red shirts and long boots and a few cutting bark from the iron bark trees.

Ascending to the summit of a hill we found ourselves in the town, and at one end of a very long street; and though little more than two months old "Nashville" looked larger than most of the coast towns, and certainly presented a most lively and animated appearance. Stretching along the side of a deep gully it looked something like a foreign town on a great market day. On each side of us trees were being cut down, or their topmost limbs lopped off by a blackfellow. Bark humpies, tents and even flag-staffs were being erected, while many of the houses were of two stories, and shingled—a brass-plate on one bearing the inscription of "Surgeon and Accoucher." We learnt that the sites for the shops were secured by payment of £4 for the first year, *then*, if the digging turns out a success, these sites are offered for competition.

Some little way down the street we came upon a gully running right across it, and terminating in the

main gully, and so closely had the smaller one been worked on each side of the road, that barely sufficient room had been left for a dray to pass between the "shafts," which were in many cases sixteen and twenty feet "down." A little temporary shed was erected over the mouth of each shaft; this shelters the man who is winding up the buckets of dirt which his mate fills at the bottom. Each shaft had a large heap of dirt round its mouth, and these were being gradually carried off by one-horse drays to the Mary river, there to be cradled and washed: these drays were earning £3 to £4 a-day. We accompanied one dray with its precious load to the river, about a mile distant, passing on our way amongst endless tents and bark humpies, whilst holes were being sunk in every direction. Passing through a few yards of thick scrub overhanging the river, we found ourselves on its banks—at this part very steep. As far as the eye could reach, both up and down the stream, we saw one long line of diggers washing the dirt and rocking their cradles, the water perfectly yellow from the process.

The dray we had accompanied was backed to the brink, and its load tilted down a channel cut in the bank, being thus deposited at the feet of the washers who are usually mates of those who work the claim. All was being carried on with the utmost regu-



larity and decorum : each claim having so many feet of the river to wash in. We counted about thirty drays near us going and returning. Two men and a boy were engaged washing the particular heap that we were interested in : one of them had a long trough filled with water in which he “raked” the dirt backwards and forwards with a stick : another used the cradle, while the boy had the tin dish. The cradle was placed at the edge of the water, and with short strokes rocked quickly to and fro. The upper part being a sieve allows the small stuff to fall through on to a lower shelf, but keeps back the pebbles, and, as we had an opportunity of witnessing in this case, many a plump nugget, which the “cradler” picked out with the most provoking coolness, and carelessly threw into a pint pot at his feet. The boy was occupied in washing the “tailings” of the cradle ; “tailings” means the dirt which has undergone one washing and examination, these were washed in a tin dish by its being gently waved round and round in the water till everything is washed out excepting the gold, which, owing to its weight, remains. We had selected this “washing” as the dirt came from a very rich claim, turning out as much as eight ounces to the load, and gold was worth at this period £3. 8s an ounce, at the Commercial bank, the only one at the diggings at the time.

Some of the diggers on the creek were "stacking their dirt," *i. e.* heaping up a great quantity before carting it to the water. We saw one ordinary looking heap which an old digger valued at about £1000, yet no gold could be seen in it, till washed; but on passing these heaps after a shower of rain the gold will be frequently seen in them.

True diggers are a fine set of men, and quiet and orderly as a rule. They always like to see fair play, and have certain rules amongst themselves which they adhere to most strictly. While they have money they live on the very best of everything. Their slang is peculiar and their expressions quaint.

I was one day gazing down a dark shaft, wondering whether any one was there, and as my eyes became accustomed to the gloom I saw there was a drive at the bottom, and fancying I heard a noise, asked, Is any one down there? "Only a buck rabbit digging a hole for *his self*," was the answer, in which I omit a word, referring to the buck, which was extremely expressive but scarcely parliamentary. Having received this answer I was thinking of retreating, when my digger backed out of his hole and threw me up a nugget with, "not so bad, mate."

One can hardly understand such confidence displayed towards a total stranger, but in many other instances I noticed the same trait in their character.



This nugget was followed by another, and I returned them by descending his rope: there was barely room for two of us, four feet by two being the proportion of the shaft, and twenty-four feet deep. I was permitted to crawl into the drive and pick out some dirt; and having the luck to find a small nugget weighing about five dwts. was allowed to retain it. This man was clearing £30 and £40 a week; but from the very short acquaintance I had with the work, I am satisfied alluvial digging is tremendous fatigue—at the bottom of a deep shaft *lying* in a hole which just fits one, and picking the earth away within a few inches of one's face.

In the bottom of the gullies some of the digging was very hard, and we watched a man with his pick working at the rock in a shallow trench, and working steadily too; and on returning the next day he had made but little progress and found no gold, but he persevered and was at length rewarded.

Some remarkable cases have occurred at Gympie of gold finding. One gentleman connected with the Government went there for a holiday, commenced digging, and shortly afterwards turned up the monster nugget of these diggings, it weighed considerably over 800 ounces.

It is astonishing with what rapidity the bakers, butchers, and storekeepers flock to the diggings,



and we found them not only supplying all the necessities of life, but also most of its luxuries, and at Gympie nothing was expensive. We stayed at one of the public houses that was being built, and though too soon for beds, yet we lived as well as we could have done in any town, and as there were no musquitoes we managed to sleep very comfortably with a blanket on the ground. Even at this early period of its history "Nashville" boasted of a café de Paris and a billiard table. Every evening the town presented a very gay appearance, from the numerous lights hanging from shop fronts and trees on each side of its long straggling street. But *the* night 'par excellence' was Saturday night: the whole length of the street was so full of diggers that we could hardly move at all, and what with singing, swearing, fighting, drinking, bargaining for loaves, beef, and sausages for Sunday's dinner, the noise was tremendous, while every public house was crammed with men discussing their various "finds," and "*shouting*" in the double sense of the word with "here's luck," "here's fun," "here's my opinion of you," or, "to show there's no coolness," &c., while they frequently paid for their drinks with small samples of gold. In one house we came upon a huge Italian singing selections from the Operas to a delighted audience, who, though they could not

understand the style of his singing, judging from the remarks they made, evidently appreciated his fine voice. We entered a music-hall shortly afterwards (one shilling entrance), heard some good songs and recitations, witnessed some fair boxing, and the best step dancer that we had ever before seen performed to the lively tune of two fiddles. On a digging one often comes across a really good professional, who failing to be successful in digging, makes money by the exercise of his profession. One favourite vocalist of the diggers used to make his £1 or so a day by "fossicking," i.e. digging here and there, but going to no depth, and at night he attracted "crowded houses" by his singing.

But what interested us a great deal more than any other branch of the diggings were the Quartz reefs, and it is chiefly on the extent and richness of these that the permanency of a digging depends, for good reefs will last for very many years before they are worked out. On the alluvial diggings (dispersed amongst the quartz reef) men that we knew had worked out their claims and could not get others, but the owners of a good reef may be drawing gold from it for a very long period.

What are known as "a poor man's diggings" are *alluvial*, while the *reefs* require capital to work them.

A gentleman with whom we were acquainted was



part owner in one of the richest reefs at Gympie, the "Lady Mary" reef. His shaft was near a deep gully, and he informed us that he first struck the reef by noticing the pieces of quartz lying in a peculiar position in the bank of this gully, and 'pointing' in one direction; his shaft was about twelve feet deep, and while we were there it was not being worked, as there was no quartz crushing machine on the diggings, and it is useless to heap up more than a certain quantity of quartz before a machine arrives.

The law in this case is, that a digger must "shepherd" his claim up to 12 o'clock every day; he *must* be on it whether working it or not, if he fails to do this any one can "jump" it: by registering the claim this can be avoided. This shaft was a large open one; two easy drops, and we were at the bottom of it; but not prepared for what we saw—on a sheet of bark being removed we were fairly transfixed with astonishment; the slab of quartz disclosed to view was about a yard-and-a-half long, and about two yards deep, these were not of course its natural boundaries: it might go for miles in length and several yards deep, but this was the extent laid bare. This quartz was of a very white description, thus contrasting strongly with the gold, which was scattered all over its surface, chiefly in specks the size of two or three pins' heads, but sometimes in patches



as large as a pea : there was scarcely a square inch of quartz without gold in it. On a piece of the quartz being chipped off we found the gold inside as thick as ever. So slow were capitalists to believe in the richness of these reefs, that *four* months after this only one crushing machine had made its appearance on the ground, and this could only crush about thirty tons a week : and many diggers were actually for weeks crushing their quartz by hand in iron mortars. Some specimens of quartz that were shewn us were so rich, that after being cracked by a blow, the piece would not separate till it was *twisted* in two, the gold inside holding it together.

Money can be made in various ways on diggings, apart from digging ; but I would warn any one from taking shares in a Quartz Reef Company without very great care, and ascertaining every particular by himself direct. On the other hand a great chance is sometimes lost ; a visitor to Gympie was offered a share in a reef for £5 before it was opened, he declined ; the reef was opened the same afternoon, and so very rich was the quartz found to be, that he could not then have purchased a share for £100.

Many men did well at the commencement of these diggings by "carrying," driving cattle and sheep, butchering, &c., but like the diggings themselves these were soon overdone.

The Government have been latterly forming roads, laying out the town, and extending the telegraph to it. Gympie, though rich, does not extend over a great extent of ground so far, and hundreds have found there is no room, and have had to turn back. Some have been waylaid and murdered by the Blacks for the sake of the miserable clothes they have on. One man, having been stripped of his clothes, appeared at a station we were staying at : he had plastered his body over with mud to protect it from the sun.

All the Chinese diggers were chased off by the Europeans during our stay : they numbered 600.

In May, 1868, there were, within the small area comprising the Gympie gold field, no less than forty-two reefs being worked, and over 4000 ounces were sent down every fortnight to Maryborough.

The following statements from the "*Nashville Times*," of May, 1868, may be thoroughly relied upon as shewing the richness of some of the reefs.

"The wet weather has been greatly against those who are working what little sound alluvial ground is left. It was feared until yesterday that the river would rise considerably, and seriously interfere with those who are now devoting their labour and money towards testing the bottom of it. Rumours are constantly being circulated of new 'rushes,' one we



have heard of sixty miles from here. From the various quartz reefs good accounts are daily received. On the new 'Monkland reef,' at a claim belonging to two men named Murphy and Donohere, there are about thirty-five tons of stone on the grass, out of which, one piece, weighing nearly half a hundred weight, was picked up two or three days ago, containing through it a vein of gold of nearly half an inch in width. We had an opportunity of seeing at the Bank of New South Wales, 101 ozs. 16 dwts. crushed by pestle and mortar out of 40 lbs. of the stone from this reef, and there yet remains, on a fair estimate, from six to ten ounces of fine gold in the refuse. This would seem absurd at first, were there not other instances of the richness of our reefs being reported daily: as other proofs of the above richness, we may refer to the return received from crushing by Messrs. Munro, Lynch & Co. of the New Zealand reef, of 192 ozs. 19 dwts. from 23 tons of stone; and by Messrs. Lawrence and Pollock's claim on the 'Lady Mary' reef, of 470 ozs. from 400 lbs. of stone. A prospector's claim has been granted on the 'Band of Hope' reef, which is situated near the crushing machine; there is a good show in the stone which is about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, the party have been prospecting for some time past."

A few days later another correspondent writes:



"The reefs continue to disclose marvellous wealth. On Monday, Pollock and Lawrence, the prospectors, lodged £1200 worth of gold, other claims are turning out fully as rich. In the alluvial there is dulness, the Kilkeyan rush having taken off a large number of people, many of them getting at any rate a little gold."

"Quartz reefs are being discovered everywhere, and there is hardly a place of residence or business which is likely to remain exempt from the 'pegging out' process now going on. A few days ago a peg of the dimensions required by the regulations was affixed in front of the bank of New South Wales, by the prospectors of the 'St. George's' reef, who hold a claim on the flat opposite to the Brisbane hotel: the claim is owned by three men, who whilst engaged in alluvial working, came across a reef from which they obtained a prospect sufficiently promising to warrant their applying for the usual claim in such cases granted.

"Being only about twenty yards from the Bank, it has been jocosely suggested that their best plan would be to drive under the great iron safe in those premises, and on an auspicious day ensure a 'lob' at once."

Proceeding along the coast of Queensland northwards, the next gold field that we hear of is the

“Calliope.” As Maryborough is the port of the Gympie gold fields, so is Gladstone the port of the Calliope, and steamers call regularly at both ports two or three times a week.

Then still farther north come the Rockhampton gold-fields, Crocodile, Rosewood, Morinish, &c., all doing well. Again at Clermont (Peak Downs) both gold and copper mines are being worked successfully. The latter is in the hands of a Company.

Excellent accounts reach us also from the Cape River gold fields, the port of which is Cleveland Bay in the far north, these are the latest discovered diggings; and doubtless, from the auriferous nature of the country, many more diggings will “break out,” as the country is “prospected.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

### DIGEST OF NEW LAND ACT.

THE new Land Act comprehends many principles which are entirely new in Australian legislation, and on that account may be looked upon as a subject of interest in relation to its future operation. The colony, generally, has, owing to the unsuitable character of the late laws relating to the alienation of Crown land, been almost unanimous in demanding a reform, and has also exhibited a most creditable desire to introduce such a liberality into the land policy, as would enable the highest inducements to be held out to all who were disposed to settle on the soil, at the same time protecting, so far as it was possible to do so, existing interests. Whether this has been accomplished or not cannot be a subject for discussion in this paper; but it has been mentioned in order that the introduction of provisions affecting the pastoral lessees into an Act, relating more particularly to the sale and freehold occupation of the Crown lands, should be fully understood. The practical working of a measure so fraught with power, according as it is administered, to improve



the condition of the colony, attracts, at the outset, considerable attention, affecting, as it does, the interest of almost every colonist ; for no description of property has so many charms as land. Its possession is a source of pleasure in itself, and it is well known that persons are willing to purchase land on a slender hope of its proving a remunerative investment.

The land policy of a Colony is therefore always the one on which there appears to be the largest amount of interest taken. It is certainly the one in which most of the population are concerned ; and whether it is the labourer or shepherd, with his few pounds in the savings' bank, or the owner of flocks without number, each of them looks to the land question as one on which their labours depend for providing in after years ; the means which should enable them to retire from the battle of life, or leave their families in the enjoyment of competence. It is, therefore, with no small feelings of pride that Queensland has now launched into her little community a new land law, offering to each of her industrious sons a means of securing a home, and something more than that ; for the possession of such a blessing as a house gives, confers also many other advantages which will prove of the best service to the State, namely, self-respect and content-

ment. To those outside the boundaries she offers the same inducements to settle on her territory; and when it is shewn what are the terms on which land can be secured, and the boundless area open to selection, each of which will probably offer some special advantage suitable to the tastes or circumstances of the selector, nothing more need be added to prove that in no other part of Australia have such advantages been offered to the man of moderate capital, as may be obtained within the boundaries of Queensland. The Land Act, considered in its relation to the public, and apart from those principles which more immediately concern the pastoral tenant, is one which is extremely simple in principle. It is the intention in this paper only to deal with the Act in the above mentioned way, as it is not deemed necessary to introduce into a digest what has no connection with the sale of land, further than as a means of opening it up to the community generally. Adopting this plan, therefore, it may be stated that the Colony has been divided into the settled and unsettled districts. The former are the districts which are principally affected by the *Crown Lands Alienation Act*, and may be estimated as containing 51,488,000 acres. The lands comprised in the settled districts include most of the valuable lands of the Colony—certainly all that possess any particular

advantage for other use than pastoral purposes. They are situated in the following districts, viz. :—

	Acres.
Moreton, . . . containing	4,480,000
Darling Downs, . . . „	3,840,000
Wide Bay and Burnett, . . . „	4,512,000
Port Curtis, . . . „	8,960,000
Kennedy, . . . „	6,528,000
Cook, . . . „	16,320,000
North Cook, . . . „	2,048,000
Burke, . . . „	4,800,000

The three first contain the largest proportion of the population, and, therefore, a greater quantity of land may be expected to be sold within their boundaries ; but it has been found that the Northern districts possess some material advantages in the formation of farms for tropical produce, which capitalists and others will not be slow to turn to account, when the subject is brought more prominently before them.

The Act, as has been stated, applies to the settled districts ; but, as there are one or two exceptions, it would not be out of place to allude to them now, before entering into its details. They are the following :—Land may be purchased in any township reserves, where the areas are large enough to allow it, on the same terms as in the settled districts ; and



under the sixteenth clause of the Act, selections are allowed on land that has never been under pastoral lease, and is not at the time of application under license, at the price of second-class pastoral land, viz., five shillings per acre.

In the settled districts, most of the land has been, up to the present time, under lease for pastoral purposes. Each division or block of country is called a run, bearing a distinctive name, which the holder occupies with sheep or cattle, and pays a rent assessed on its capabilities for grazing. These leases have been renewed from time to time on the terms contained in the several Acts of Parliament in force at the expiration of the leases. Under the present Act, it is proposed to resume the whole of each run at the expiration of twelve months; but in the event of the lessee being willing to come under the provisions of the Act, he will be allowed a lease for ten years of half his run, and a license for the resumed half, which is open to selection before survey in the manner prescribed by the Act. These leases cannot be taken away by the Government of the day, as the Act provides that a joint resolution of both Houses of Parliament is necessary before any part of the leased half of a run can be resumed. The selections must, therefore, be made on the resumed half, and as soon as the runs are divided—a work which is

now proceeding as fast as circumstances will admit of—a description of the land open to the public will be furnished for general guidance. In each settled district of the colony there is a Land Commissioner, and in each of the towns a land agent, who is authorised to receive applications within the sub-district assigned to him. The machinery in working the Act will, therefore, on a proper explanation being given, appear very plain and simple. In dealing with this branch of the subject, it is proposed to treat the following divisions of the Land Act *seriatim*, which include all the classes in which the public are generally interested :—

Conditional Purchases.

Homesteads.

Sugar and Coffee Leases.

Mineral Lands.

Gold Fields.

Commonages.

General Provisions.

#### *Conditional Purchases.*

The portion of the Act referring to conditional purchases contains some of its most important provisions, and embodies principles that are, at any rate, new in the legislation of Queensland or the

other colonies. In the first place land can be purchased at lower rates and on easier terms of payment. Larger areas can also be secured, by which means both agricultural and pastoral farming may be combined in one selection. Secondly, the land is classified with the view of making the rate of purchase-money proportionate to the value of the land in connection with its capabilities for either of the above uses.

The foregoing are the principal features in the Act relating to conditional purchases, with the exception of certain conditions which the selector has to comply with, and which have been introduced into the Act in order to prevent undue monopoly of land, or its being selected solely with a view for speculative purposes. These conditions also impart to the measure a practical character, as whatever encouragement is afforded to purchase land on the liberal terms offered, that land must be turned to useful account, and a certain expenditure laid out on it as a guarantee of its being devoted to settlement. The lands open to settlement are—

*Firstly.* The crown lands in the settled districts not under lease or license.

*Secondly.* The lands on the resumed halves of runs, inclusive of the railway reserves, which extend



three miles on each side of the railway lines throughout their entire length.

*Thirdly.* The lands in large township reserves, not less than two miles in a direct line from the nearest town lot offered for sale.

These lands constitute the area available for selection under the Act, an area which, in the gross, is twice as large as Ireland.

The areas allowed to be selected by any one person, and the rates of the purchase-money, per acre, are as follows :—

Agricultural land, not less than 40, nor more than 640, at 15s per acre.

First-class pastoral land, not less than 80, nor more than 2,560, at 10s per acre.

Second-class pastoral land, not less than 80, nor more than 7,680, at 5s per acre.

These are the maximum areas allowed for each class, which it is not permitted to exceed. The selection may be in one, or not more than three blocks; but provision is made for adjacent lands being selected, provided the boundaries are counterminous, and the maximum area of each class is not exceeded. On town and railway reserves no application comprising second-class pastoral land can be received at any time.

The form and mode of taking up land is in this

way :—The applicant attends at a land agent's office, and having ascertained that the land which he wishes to select is available—if he has not previously determined this—lodges an application (form F. in the regulations appended) in triplicate, accompanied with the amount of the first year's rent and survey fee. This application sufficiently explains itself. It contains a declaration that the applicant is above the age of 21 years, and that he applies for the land in his own behalf and use, and not as agent or trustee for any other person whatever. He further declares that he intends to use the same, and that he has not entered into any agreement to sell, demise, or mortgage it. These specific declarations are required in accordance with the provisions of the Act, being portion of the conditions under which the land is held. The application should also contain a clear description of the boundaries, with reference to some known feature or previous survey. The area, and the particulars of the first year's rent, being one-tenth of the whole purchase-money, whether in cash or land orders,\* are also to be furnished. With respect to the area, it may be remarked that each class of land may be included in one application—for example :—

\* Non-transferable land orders are available for selection if issued in favour of the selector. Transferable orders are available for all persons selecting. These land orders have been issued to immigrants paying their own passages to the colony.

	Acres.	At per acre.	First years' rent.
Agricultural land . .	50	1 6	3 15 0
First-class pastoral land .	100	1 0	5 0 0
Second-class pastoral land	200	0 6	5 0 0
<hr/>			
Total . . . .	350	Annual rent }	£13 15 0

On receipt by the land agent of this application, an entry is made in a book, called the "Application Book," which the applicant signs. This entry governs the priority of the selections at the time the Commissioner deals with it, as hereafter described; and on the land agent giving the applicant a receipt for his rent, no further proceedings are to be taken until the next Commissioner's Court sitting, which occurs about once a fortnight, at which the applicant or his agent must attend, when the acceptance or the rejection of the application is publicly declared to the applicant or his agent. After such declaration, the deposit of rent previously paid on the rejected applications is then refunded to the applicants by the Commissioner, and in the case of those provisionally approved, instructions are sent to a surveyor to effect a survey of the selection. At the time the survey is being carried out, means are taken to verify the classification estimated by the selector; and if the Commissioner, through such surveyor, or



a competent witness, or his own personal knowledge, considers that a higher classification existed, he is empowered to call upon the selector to pay a sufficient sum to cover the balance due on such higher classification; and if the demand be not attended to within three months, the land becomes forfeited. After the boundaries are surveyed and the rents adjusted, the Government will issue a lease for ten years, at a yearly rent of one-tenth of the purchase-money. This lease will contain certain provisions, of which the following are the principal ones:—

1. The lease shall date from the nearest first day of January or July to date of application.

2. The annual rent to be received for every acre, or fraction of an acre, shall be:—

Agricultural land, 1s 6*d* per acre.

First-class pastoral, 1s.

Second-class pastoral, 6*d*.

And such rent should be paid in cash to the land agent of the district in which the selection is situated, on or before the 31st of March in each year.

3. The lessee shall, within six months from the completion of survey, erect substantial boundary-posts along the measured boundaries of the land, at distances not exceeding five chains apart, or shall erect a good substantial fence along such boundary. If the posts fall into decay, the Commissioners of the

district can require the lessee to replace them, and if this is not done may inflict a fine for the neglect.

4. During the currency of such lease the Governor, or any person authorised in that behalf, may make entry to dig and remove gold or other metals, &c., provided that any damage done to lessee shall be made good to him, by paying an amount to be determined by arbitration.

5. Residence in person, or by bailiff, is necessary during the currency of the lease.

6. In the case of pastoral land,—if the lessee shall prove within three years from the date of selection, by two credible witnesses, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, that he has resided in person, or by bailiff, on the said land for a period of two years, and that a sum at the rate of not less than ten shillings per acre for first-class pastoral land, and five shillings an acre for second-class pastoral land, has been expended in substantial improvements, or that he has fenced in the said land with a substantial fence, then the Commissioner shall issue a certificate that the conditions aforesaid have been duly performed, and the lessee shall be entitled to a deed of grant in fee-simple on the payment of the balance of the ten years' rent.

7. In the case of agricultural land,—if the lessee shall similarly prove, within three years from date of selection, that he has resided in person, or by bailiff,

for a period of not less than two years, and that he has expended a sum equal to ten shillings per acre, or that he has fenced in the land with a substantial fence, he shall be entitled to a certificate from the Commissioner that the conditions have been performed, and to a grant of the land on payment of the balance of the ten years' rent; but if at any time during the currency of the lease he shall prove that one-tenth part of the land has been cultivated, he shall be absolved from the conditions of residence, and a grant shall issue on payment of the balance of rent as aforesaid.

8. No transfer or assignment of any lease can be allowed until the lessee has obtained a certificate, as above described, from the Commissioner; but after the issue of such certificate, transfer may proceed with the sanction of the Government, on payment of ten shillings for the registration thereof.

9. After the certificate is obtained, balance of purchase-money may be paid up in one sum in cash.

10. The Government reserves a right to resume land for road purposes during ten years, on payment of twice the amount which should have been paid as rent or purchase-money on such land, and when the land is enclosed, the Government will be required to fence off the road from adjacent land.

The above are the conditions on which the leases



are issued. They are given in detail and at greater length than was at first deemed necessary ; but they are so important in conveying a perfect knowledge of the principles of the Act, that it was found requisite to introduce them. It will be observed that a lessee must, sometime during the third year of his lease, be in a position to prove that he has performed the prescribed conditions. A failure in this respect, or in paying the rent, will involve forfeiture, and the Governor is empowered either to proclaim the land again open to selection, or direct it to be sold by auction.

The general rules applicable to conditional purchases include certain restrictions respecting the shape of the selections, and the proportion of frontage allowed on rivers or roads ; also, with respect to monopoly of water, or other privileges, which it is not necessary to enter upon, further than to state that they are required for the protection of public convenience. It may, however, be added, that conditional purchasers are restricted, under a penalty, from depasturing more than twenty head of cattle, or fifty sheep, for every hundred acres of land, until their selections are securely fenced. This provision is rendered necessary, as the pastoral lessee is entitled to a license to depasture stock, under certain limitations, on the resumed half of the run, and, there-

fore his interest has to be protected. With this view the cattle and sheep of the conditional purchasers and pastoral licensees must have a distinctive brand, to be registered at the Commissioner's Office.

### *Homesteads.*

The introduction of the clauses referring to homesteads in the Act is one of its distinctive features ; and being to a certain extent derived from America, the result of its operation is looked upon with some degree of anxiety. In the earlier stages of passing the Act through the legislature, it was proposed to adopt the principle of giving the land gratuitously, provided that residence for five years was complied with ; but, amongst the more prudent of the members, it was deemed that a too great liberality, under the peculiar circumstances of the colony, which are not at all analogous to those of the United States, would prove prejudicial to the best interests of the community. It was, therefore, wisely determined that a small annual rental should be charged, together with the cost of survey, which cannot be considered as an oppressive impost upon any one who is in a position to settle, and at the same time it provides a guarantee that the occupation of the land is carried out in good faith for the purposes of settlement.

The Act allows any person who is the head of a

family, or who is of the age of twenty-one years, to enter upon eighty acres of agricultural land, or one hundred and sixty acres of pastoral land, open to selection, on payment annually for five years at the rate of ninepence an acre for the former, and sixpence for the latter description of land. There are also the following conditions to be observed in applying for a homestead, and in occupying it afterwards. In the first place, the applicant must lodge with the land agent, the form K in the regulations, together with the first year's rent and survey fee, having previously made the declaration appearing on the said form, that he or she is head of a family, or is twenty-one years of age, and that such application is made for his or her exclusive use, and that he or she has not on any former occasion exercised such right or homestead selection, and that such entry is made for the use of the applicant, etc. Residence is required during the five years, and also, in addition, either that one-tenth of the land should be cultivated, or that the portion should be securely fenced. On proof being furnished to the Commissioner of the conditions being fulfilled, a Crown grant shall issue to the holder. Lands acquired under the homestead clauses of the Act do not become liable to the satisfaction of any debts contracted prior to the issuing of the Crown grant. There is also a provision to the



effect, that after affording proof of two years' residence and the prescribed extent of cultivation, the selector may obtain a grant on paying the upset price of the land.

### *Sugar and Coffee Leases.*

Any applicant for selection of land within ten miles from the coast or a navigable river, not included in the leased half of a pastoral run, who states in his application that he intends to use the land for the cultivation of sugar or coffee, shall be allowed to select a block of *agricultural* land not less than 320 acres, nor more than 1,280 acres; and on proof of his having cultivated one-tenth of the land in either sugar or coffee within three years, he shall be relieved from the obligation of residence, but in all other respects he shall be liable to the same conditions as any other conditional purchaser.

### *Mineral Lands.*

The following are the conditions on which land can be purchased for mining purposes, other than gold:—

1st. The area of land to be sold not to exceed 640 acres, nor less than 40 acres.

2nd. The price in no case to be less than £1 per acre.

3rd. The application is to be made to the Minister for Lands in the form F in the regulations, and a deposit of five shillings per acre is to be lodged at the same time; the balance of purchase-money to be paid within twelve months—except in the remote districts of the colony, when the period is to be eighteen months. Before the grant for the land is issued, satisfactory evidence of the applicant having expended a sum equal to one pound per acre in *bonâ fide* working the minerals must be adduced.

Under these regulations the applicant is protected in his operations for a period of twelve or eighteen months, as the case may be, by a payment of five shillings per acre. The principle is virtually an authorised license for mining purposes, with a right of purchase at the expiration of the above-mentioned periods.

#### *Gold Fields and Commons.*

The lands in gold fields are commonages under the Act, and power is also given to proclaim unsold land on township reserves as a common, on a petition signed by not less than thirty freeholders resident within such township. Land may be sold on commons, and regulations made for the purposes of giving effect to commonage rights, subject to certain restrictions, amongst which it appears that the de-

pasturing of sheep is prohibited, and that a charge is to be made for each head of cattle depastured thereon.

*General Provisions.*

In addition to the provisions above described, there are other important ones which deserve a passing allusion, in order to show that almost everything that tends to the development of settlement on the soundest principles is included in the measure.

The Government have power to proclaim township reserves on suitable sites, and also to grant as reserves land for a number of public purposes too numerous to mention, but which may be generally understood as having reference to the industrial, scholastic, recreational, and charitable wants of the community. Power is also granted to close roads that may be reserved for communication—but for which no use is afterwards found; also to sell by private contract lands on townships where improvements have been effected previous to survey. This provision is rendered necessary, as on several occasions it is found that settlement precedes the arrangements made by the Government.

An important portion of the Act comprises the rules in which auction sales are conducted. It is scarcely necessary to do more than to refer to them



in a general way, as the purchaser is absolved from all conditions after the purchase-money is paid, which requires to be lodged with the land agent within one month from the date of sale. All lands submitted to auction require to be proclaimed for at least one month previous to day of sale. The portions offered are put up at the following upset prices, viz. :—

Town lots not less than eight pounds per acre.

Suburban lands not less than one pound per acre when within one mile from town lands, and fifteen shillings per acre when beyond one mile from town lands.

Agricultural land not less than fifteen shillings per acre.

First-class pastoral lands not less than ten shillings per acre.

Second-class pastoral lands not less than five shillings per acre.

The town lands average from one rood to one acre ; suburban from one to one hundred and sixty acres ; the country lands from forty to six hundred and forty acres. A deposit of twenty per cent on the amount bid has to be paid in cash to the land agent or auctioneer at the time of sale, and the balance within one month as above stated ; failing which the land is forfeited and open to the next selector. It may also be remarked that all unsold lots are open to sale on the following day at the upset price, and continue

open to selection until they are again submitted to sale by auction, when, if the previous classification is found to be too high, the upset price will be reduced accordingly.

All improved lands forfeited for any failure, in compliance with the conditions of the Act, will be sold by public auction ; but the value of the improvements will be added to the upset price, and the amount received thereon returned to the person whose land became subject to forfeiture.

For the purpose of encouraging the Volunteer movement in the Colony, grants are authorised to Volunteers, not on the paid staff, to the extent of ten acres of suburban land, or fifty acres of country land, on the terms of efficient and continuous service of five years from the passing of the Act. This public acknowledgment of the importance of maintaining a body of trained men for colonial defence is likely to be productive of much benefit by giving a permanent standing to the force, and furnishing an object to the members in maintaining their position as Volunteers, after the novelty of the pursuit has been weakened by practice and experience of its duties, and thus preventing the dispersion of the older members, whilst new blood is being constantly introduced.

There are a large number of clauses referring purely

to technical arrangements in connection with working the measure, such as appraisements, arbitration, and the like ; also, with respect to the issue of licenses for cutting timber on, and removing gravel and earth from Crown lands. A severe punishment is also provided for any attempt to evade the Act or its provisions, including also the forfeiture of the land, and the improvements effected thereon.

In thus hastily sketching the general provisions of a measure so important, it may be useful to refer to its general aspects, and to its suitability to the character of the Colony of Queensland, which comprises an area so vast, that no hopes of freehold settlement extending to any great extent, under the legislation of previous years, could ever have been anticipated. There is every assurance that the alienation of the land will be productive of benefit, as it may be presumed that the purchaser will turn his property to the best advantage. There is certainly a guarantee to a partial extent in that ; and though an improvement may not be observed at the outset, there can be no reasonable doubt that the productive power of the land will be materially increased, and a demand spring up for capital investments in furthering that object. Under the Act, it will be observed that 10,880 acres, inclusive of the three classes of land, may be obtained by one selector ;



and though, perhaps, he may have some difficulty of securing such a large area in the most convenient situation, there can be no question of his ability to purchase that extent in some suitable locality, where his operations can be conducted advantageously. It is scarcely necessary to point out that a lease of 10,880 acres for ten years, at an annual rent of £368, which is the rent chargeable for that extent of land, is not a bad investment. The area allowed also, is sufficiently large to enable sheep farming to pay, when paddocking is resorted to, or to combine that class of farming with agriculture. With the prospect of securing land on such easy terms, and being enabled to turn it to profitable account in the several ways open in the colony, it will not be surprising if many from the adjoining ones avail themselves of the facilities to purchase, and thus by their example tend to the introduction of somewhat similar principles in the land policy of the other Australian provinces. But it may be conceded that peculiar circumstances fitted Queensland, especially, for the reforms introduced in the new Act, and that it would be difficult for legislation on the same basis to be adopted out of her territory. The reduction in the price of land is unquestionably one of the most important principles of the measure; still it is one which is not quite realised to its fullest extent at the first glance. To the ordinary observer, 15s, 10s,

and 5s, for the respective classes per acre, represent a considerable decrease, as compared with the former price of land; but when it is taken into consideration that the payments extend over ten years, and that the unpaid balance stands as a debt to the Crown, decreasing every year by a tenth, and that for unpaid balance interest may justly be considered chargeable as a deduction from the full upset price of the land, it will be seen that the residue left is very small to represent the actual price at which it is sold.

Assuming, therefore, that ten per cent is a fair rate of interest to allow, the payments would arrange themselves in this manner, taking the case of agricultural land for example: viz., 100 acres agricultural land, upset price 15s per acre, for which a yearly rental is charged of £7. 10s.

	Unpaid balance due to the Crown.	Interest 10 per cent.
1st year . . .	£67 10 0	£6 15 0
2    "   . . .	60 0 0	6 0 0
3    "   . . .	52 10 0	5 5 0
4    "   . . .	45 0 0	4 10 0
5    "   . . .	37 10 0	3 15 0
6    "   . . .	30 0 0	3 0 0
7    "   . . .	22 10 0	2 5 0
8    "   . . .	15 0 0	1 10 0
9    "   . . .	7 10 0	0 15 0
10   "   . . .	.....	.....
Total interest . . .		£33 15 0

This gives a total interest amounting to £33. 15s, which, being deducted from £75. (the full price of the land at the rate of 15s per acre), leaves £41. 5s, which represents 8s 3*d* as the actual price of the land. By the same process, first-class pastoral land is shown to be sold at 5s 6*d*, and second-class pastoral at half that rate. By this practical test the cheapness of the land is exhibited more conspicuously ; and when other advantages are taken into account, there are few portions of her Majesty's dominions that hold out stronger inducements than Queensland to persons to settle on her soil.

THE END.



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